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COMMENTARY

The White Citizens Councils — DAVID HALBERSTAM
Soviet Policy and Jewish Fate — WALTER Z. LAQUEUR
Is the Intellectual Obsolete? — H. STUART HUGHES
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Cedars of Lebanon
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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Clement Greenberg — Maurice J. Goldbloom — Louis Finkelstein
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COMMENTARY

THE WHITE CITIZENS COUNCILS

Respectable Means for Unrespectable Ends

DAVID HALBERSTAM

IN MARCH of this year Congressman John Bell William told a Greenville, Mississippi, White Citizens Council, "I'd gladly trade all the Negroes in the country for my few good nigger friends." Williams is no political scientist—he flunked out of the University of Mississippi law school in near record time—but on this occasion he did, if inadvertently, define the nature of the Citizens Council movement. Pull aside the curtain of States' Rights and you find, more prominent than anything else, this desire to trade coat-and-tie Negroes for barefoot ones.

The White Citizens Councils, a loosely connected series of local groups which have arisen throughout the South in protest against the Supreme Court's May 17, 1954 desegregation decision, undoubtedly constitute a very significant political phenomenon. Individually, the Councils can be either powerful or frail, at times the sincere expression of confusion and desperation, at other times the vehicle for personal frustration. But the single thread connecting all the Councils, strong and weak, is the determination not just to oppose integration in the public schools but to stop or at least postpone it. In most of the Deep South, where hostility to integration is nearly universal, it is this militancy and dedication that make the Council member stand out.

Despite occasional efforts by supporters to build the Councils up into a movement of broad conservatism, their only serious purpose is to fight the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Not only do they contest the NAACP's desegregation suits, but they seek to cancel much else that the Negro has gained over the last half-century by keeping him out of the polling booth. The exact strength of the Councils is difficult to determine: in Mississippi, their cradle, 100,000 members are claimed, but sober estimates would run closer to 55,000. Yet nowhere in the Deep South is their strength to be scoffed at—it is a product of crisis and as more law suits are filed it will mount.

THE Council movement has been compared frequently to two earlier organizations that originated in the South, the Ku Klux Klan of Reconstruction times, and the

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IN SEPTEMBER the White Citizens Councils showed their latent strength by compelling schools that had been integrated without incident to re-adopt segregation. DAVID HALBERSTAM has been watching the Councils in the South for the last fifteen months, as a reporter for a small daily, and now for the Nashville *Tennessean*. Mr. Halberstam was born in New York in 1934 and is a graduate of Harvard. Articles by him have appeared in the *Reporter*.

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new Klan that appeared on the scene after World War I. And indeed there are, at least for the moment, certain parallels between the Klans—especially the original one—and the Council movement. The differences are nonetheless crucial. The Councils have an almost self-conscious desire for respectability. They struggle to achieve a constitutionally illegal purpose by "all legal means." They shun both the Klans' reputation for violence, and their haberdashery; their members are respectable citizens of the community, the quintessence of the civic luncheon club. At their meetings there is emphasis on speakers from the ministry and the universities.

The original Klan grew out of the turbulence of the post-Civil War South. Southern whites, then politically powerless, donned hood and regalia to move against the "carpetbag" Negro Union and Loyal Leagues. The membership of the Klan included the backbone of the local community: former Confederate officers, lawyers, and bankers, and it relied primarily on threats—of a "whupping," a midnight scare session, or a tar-and-feathering—to impose its own notion of peace and order on the semi-anarchy of Reconstruction. But by 1871 the conditions in the South that gave rise to the Klan had largely disappeared and it was disbanded.

The second Klan, which reached its peak in the early 1920's and began to decline after 1926, borrowed its title and uniform from the old Klan, but very little else. Historically, it was a descendant of the Know-Nothings of pre-Civil War times, and believed in an America interpreted by and under the rule of native-born Protestants. Unlike its namesake, the new Klan spread all over the nation, enjoying popularity even in such a mono-racial state as Oregon, and tried its hand at politics. It used the techniques of advertising and salesmanship, hired two professional promoters to popularize and expand it, and gained an estimated top strength of nearly four million.

The second Klan battened on postwar frustration and distrust of foreigners. First and foremost, it was fanatically anti-Catholic, though it was also anti-Negro and anti-Semitic. It set itself up as a guardian of local morality as well as patriotism, and would don the white hood and go after a man who wasn't supporting his family properly, or who had been drinking too much. Violence was frequent, tar-and-featherings abounded, and there were even lynchings. The movement finally collapsed because of its overextended membership, its lack of real purpose, and its inability to withstand strong criticism of it from both North and South.

THE White Citizens Council movement today has had to throw off the Klan's stigma and repudiate its legacy. Partly this is so because of the WCC's feeling that not even desegregation justifies violence. But more important is the fact that the economy of the South is fast industrializing: every little town has its industrial development group seeking outside (usually Northern) support, and this is the single most telling factor in the community's attitude toward the future. Whether the town will be prosperous and, frequently, whether it will survive, depends on Northern willingness to build a factory there. "We know that no industrialist is going to move here to escape from labor unrest if there's racial unrest," one Council member told me.

Like the first Klan, the WCC movement is an expression of the helplessness and frustration that have overcome a whole people. "What else can I do?" one Alabama businessman said. "I can't vote on this, my say means nothing. The legislature, the Congressmen, my neighbors all feel the same way—I've got to do something, and this is it. Isn't this country a democracy any more? I know our Nigras don't want this integration, it's just some agitators."

The membership likes to believe that the WCC is a democratic organization fighting against "totalitarian" coercion from outside. "The Citizens Council movement," says a booklet, "is the modern version of the old time town meeting, called to meet any crisis by expressing the will of the people." "In Nazi Germany," points out executive secretary R. B. (Tut) Patterson of the Mississippi

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Council, "the party controlled the schools and the people submitted and followed a doctrine which violated their consciences, saying they could do nothing because the government had spoken." The doctrine of interposition and the determination to prevent integration by "lawful means" fit very smoothly into the WCC's image of itself.

It is hard to generalize about the actuality of the Councils. In their leadership and their attitude toward the Negro, they vary considerably from community to community, depending on local social, economic, and political factors, but especially on the racial composition of the given area. In some Alabama towns, the Councils did not form until the Autherine Lucy incident, in some towns they formed long before that, as early as 1954, and in some towns they haven't formed yet. In Clifford they formed in the fall of 1955.

CLIFFORD is a town of about 15,000, located in the flatlands of southwestern Alabama. It has two main streets and a parking problem. This is a railroad town (tracks cut right through its middle), and without the railroad its population would never have passed 5,000, and it would have nothing to offer prospective industry today except a tax-free plant and the promise of no labor trouble. In the early autumn, wisps of cotton, blown off the wagons, make a trail of white along the approaching roads, like lint on a huge flannel suit. But Clifford is not a cotton town alone. Its economy is changing —a symbol of this is the Old Watershed Cotton Mill at the southern end of town, vacant since 1951, which the industrial committee hopes will become, with the aid of Northern money, the site of a furniture factory in the coming year.

Clifford, like most other small Southern towns, is always juxtaposing the old and the new. The two government low-rent housing projects stand in stark contrast to the older, staider homes, with their countless rooms and insoluble heating problems. Ready-to-wear and appliance stores line the main streets, and the old family grocery is now crowded by supermarkets. The new cars are there, the first sign of prosperity, but they share the streets with the horse-drawn wagons of Negroes transporting junk, cotton, or nothing—where these wagons go, no one knows.

A doctor returning home after four years in the army, a period which saw the addition of a new factory, told me, "This town is changing mighty fast—I don't know everyone any more." It is still a strictly stratified and predominantly church-going community, and much of its social life still centers in the church. But the new managerial class, often former Yankees, is slowly making inroads into Clifford's social life. Already people are talking of a country club.

Clifford's population is about equally divided between whites and blacks and the town has never felt it had a Negro problem like the one they have over in the Mississippi Delta, where Negroes sometimes outnumber whites by two to one or more. Though the treatment of Negroes in Clifford is fairly typical of the South, the townspeople dissociate segregation from prejudice and pride themselves on their good race relations. The last lynching was back in 1912; the last overt racial incident occurred in 1948, when some Northern group (no one remembers which group, although they are pretty sure it was a radical labor one) sent a Negro organizer down. He was quickly ushered onto a train by the white citizenry, and the sheriff (the head usher) coined what has become something of a local slogan: "This is no town for a nigger with a brief-case."

In 1952, when there were rumors that the "separate-but-equal" doctrine was about to be abrogated, Clifford built a new Negro grammar school. Opposition to the project was strong then, but the school is now the pride even of its most outspoken critics. About fifty Negroes vote in the primary, and when someone protests against this, he is told that a token vote keeps the Negroes happy. Nevertheless, sentiment in favor of Negro voting had been growing until it was scotched by the desegregation crisis.

In 1952 a large chemical plant came in,

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and Clifford's economy has since picked up considerably. New prosperity has come to the whites, while a Negro, instead of going off to Chicago when he leaves the farm, can sometimes get a job at the chem-works. The job is usually menial, but on occasion it can be quite good, as good or better than ones held by the whites, for once a position is classified as a "nigger job," no white will accept it.

Whereas the Negroes paid 8 per cent of the town's taxes in 1949, they now account for 18 per cent. Though the town can use the added revenue, Clifford people have mixed feelings about the Negro's increased income. For one thing, it is no longer so easy to dismiss him as a ne'er-do-well ("If the nigger could ever hold onto a dime," they used to say, "he'd run the South"); and for another, fifty voting Negroes do not constitute 18 per cent of the electorate. Scattered among the pathetic kindling-wood shacks of Frog Bottom, the colored ghetto, a few new, neat homes now stand which serve as a source of irritation to some whites, and to some Negroes who believe that "I can't get anywhere because I'm black."

SINCE the Supreme Court's public school decision, a certain uneasiness has settled over Clifford. "What are we going to do about it?" they all ask. The bewildered merchant thinks that once Negroes begin mixing with his children, other Negroes will begin opening their own ready-to-wear stores. The small farmer, already in economic trouble, wonders what integration will do to the Negroes who work for him. The politician fears the nascent power of the Negro vote, and worries what effect building of "separate-but-equal" facilities for Negroes will have on Clifford's bonded indebtedness. The local newspaperman fears what may happen to him if he outlines a conservative but realistic program for social change. The worker is uneasy about competing with the Negro for jobs. The very rich, who can afford to send their children to private schools, fear what will happen if integration *works;* this group, which has so long played poor white off against poor black, senses the political and economic dangers of the two discovering that they can live together. The men fear for the "purity" of their white women.

And fear breeds rumors which breed more fear:

"They say they are going to appoint a nigger to the Supreme Court, and let him decide all the integration cases."

"A nigger boy tried to get into the high school today and they had a big brawl because he sat next to a white girl." (Actually a Negro delivery boy had carried a package of books to the school; as for the brawl—well—there would have been a brawl had he really attempted to enroll.)

Last fall the Supreme Court followed up its school decision by outlawing segregation in public parks, golf courses, and swimming pools. Clifford has neither a public park nor a public golf course, and no one who took the time to think about it could possibly believe that a local Negro would ever try to go swimming in Memorial pool. But Clifford took the new decision as a threat.

After conferring with the city attorney, the mayor declared, "By God, no nigger is going to swim in Memorial pool as long as I'm mayor." All the ministers, lawyers, and aldermen of the town were summoned to a meeting; about fourteen showed up.

The mayor called first on Royce Vansett, a veteran alderman and an insurance salesman.

"I wouldn't let the niggers swim in our pool," said Vansett. "I figure any time one of them gets near the pool, we can let some redneck take care of him for us."

Bill Hollingsworth, minister of the Clifford Methodist Church, spoke next. Reverend Bill has been described as a man who had no trouble driving along a three-lane highway but who can hardly stay on the road now that it's narrowed, all of a sudden, to two lanes. There are things he would like to say, but it is getting tighter all the time and he can't take the chance. A few years ago he asked the stewards of his church if he could invite some Negroes to sing for the congregation, and everyone

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agreed that it was a fine idea. This year he neglected to ask the stewards because he knew they would refuse. He just invited the Negroes. No one complained out loud, but it wasn't like 1952 when people had left the church after services shaking their heads in admiration and saying, "Those niggers sure can sing, can't they?"

When Reverend Hollingsworth addresses the Rotary Club these days he doesn't talk directly about integration or segregation. But he asks the members to imagine what it would be like to be a Negro and have to go around to the back door and always say "sir." At this emergency meeting Hollingsworth challenged Vansett's solution. "If we leave the problem to those who can't handle it, that will only lead to bad feeling and trouble between the races. And remember, if we do that, no matter how much we talk about disapproving of violence, we will be aiding it. I'm not for integration. I'm for decency, and we are going to have to be fair. I can't imagine any Negro wanting to swim in our pool." Slip Beale, an alderman for ten years, leaned over to me and said, loud enough for most people to hear, "I thought the niggers had their own pool." Royce Vansett said they did, the Susquitchie River, and everyone laughed.

Most of the people at the meeting agreed with Bill Hollingsworth and said so. "We ought to tell the nigger leaders what we're going to do, and then do it, and that'll be separate-but-equal like it's supposed to be," one alderman proposed, and there was a nod of assent. Clifford does not discuss the swimming pool with the Negroes, it tells them about it. This is a partial victory for Bill Hollingsworth, the South's liberal on crutches. If at the meeting, or any other time, he had come out for integration, his authority and prestige would have collapsed; he might have lost his job, and certainly he would have been disregarded. "To accomplish anything here, you've got to work within the existing framework," he told me. "I've worried about this a great deal, whether I'm being fair to my ideals and my congregation, and whether I'm deceiving them. I've decided I'm not deceiving them. Right now the Negroes aren't ready to mix. What we need is 'separate-but-equal'; to preserve segregation we've got to give them a few more good schools. Time and the new industries will take care of the rest. Meanwhile it's important to keep some sort of feeling alive between the races. It would be awfully easy to split off into two camps and arrive at no solution. But this way it's getting a lot harder to come out in the open against Negro voting. And an educated Negro with a secure job won't be so easily bluffed away at the polls."

Wilburn Hampton, who has been a farmer all his life and has acquired a reputation for knowing Negroes, got up after Hollingsworth and said he opposed the idea of the Negro pool. "I know niggers, been around 'em all my life. I know if you've got a nigger working out in your backyard during the summer and it's hot and you ask him if he wants water, why he'll say no. But if you keep asking him, why sooner or later that nigger will decide he's thirsty. It's the same way with this. The best thing to do is just go along and keep quiet, and the niggers won't get too thirsty."

"It's not the old niggers like that we have to worry about," Vansett commented, "it's the young niggers. They're the ones who'll cause trouble. The NAACP is making a play for the young niggers—they don't care about the old ones, but they're teaching the young ones a lot of these radical ideas and holding meetings with them." Someone said it wasn't only the young niggers who might cause trouble, it was the young whites as well. "They're not with us, the army ruined them, sleeping out there with niggers."

Wilburn Hampton, who has friends at the post office, thought he might manage to discover who the NAACP Negroes were. But Hampton and everyone else at that meeting already knew all they would be able to find out for the time being about the local NAACP. Right now the NAACP in Clifford is partly Buchanan Robbins, and partly invisible. Robbins is the enigma. They call

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him a "nigger" contemptuously, but in truth they feel no contempt for him. As a doctor whose livelihood depends only on fellow Negroes, Robbins is relatively safe. He has never done anything for which the whites can hurt him, but lets it be known that he might do something. He just talks a lot to the Negroes and tells them that pretty soon they will be able to take over the white school and city hall, "and then one of you will become a nigger Senator from Alabama." At least, this is what they think he says.

But if Buchanan Robbins is an enigma to the white populace of Clifford, he is even more of a mystery to the pragmatic Southern liberal like Bill Hollingsworth who believes that radicals of the Robbins type are causing more harm than good. For Robbins doesn't try to make the Negroes vote-conscious; nor does he bother to teach them that they must prepare themselves for equality. He regards equality as a gift, not as a responsibility. Again, this is supposed to be his attitude.

"Let's forget about Buchanan," Hollingsworth said at this meeting, "he's only one Negro, and nobody pays any attention to him—ask your maid."

"I'd like," Vansett said almost benevolently, "to throw that nigger in the Susquitchie —with a gin fan." The others tittered at the allusion to Emmett Till.

But this is precisely the sort of thing Buchanan Robbins wants Vansett to say; it is an admission that in conflict, if in nothing else, he has achieved status and equality. In any case he is reasonably sure that no one will throw him into the Susquitchie. Educated in Tennessee, Buchanan Robbins returned to his native Alabama eager to help his race. He was appalled by the rate of venereal disease among the Negroes and suggested a campaign of education against it. But Clifford could not accept the idea of Negro leadership and of Negro educators (except in agriculture), and so over the years the town continued to discourage Robbins. The final rebuff came in 1949, when the community was raising money to buy a vacant building for its new industrial development program. Robbins and a few other Negroes offered to contribute, but they were turned down on the spot. Clifford takes care of all its needy black men, but treats its educated Negroes as though they were no different from the poor and the lame, with the result that those who might have grown into responsible leaders of their people have left or turned their attention elsewhere.

THERE were a few other people at the meeting who suggested that the best solution would be to build a pool for the Negroes. But the mayor, who was planning to run again, knew that it was easy to talk about "separate-but-equal" but not so easy to raise bonds for a school, let alone a pool ("Why don't the niggers build their own pool?" people will say). There were, after all, at least two more schools to build, and Clifford is not a wealthy town.

The mayor had considered all this and decided to duck responsibility for the problem while appearing to assume it. He called on Reid Walles, a lawyer and a faithful member of the state legislature whom everyone recognizes as a "professional" Alabaman.

"What we need here," Walles declared, "is a Citizens Council. The Councils are doing fine work all over the South, particularly Mississippi and the Carolinas." Then he said publicly what Citizens Council members are forbidden to reveal: "The Councils have been damn effective in forming boycotts and other pressures against niggers, nigger-lovers, and a few politicians who don't go along with us [meaning Big Jim Folsom]." Walles barely mentioned the professed goal of the WCC—the dissemination of information to like-thinking white-collar white men. "We want an organization we can rely on in these troubled times. You may not worry about it now, but in five years if your kids are playing and going to school with burr-headed niggers and the niggers are taking over the town and molesting your women, well, don't blame Reid Walles. Do you know what the niggers are doing in Washington? Going to society dances and parties. And I'll tell you what they really want. They want intermarriage, and mixed social groups,

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white girls going off to dances with some big black buck and dancing to jungle music with him. And we've got to cut down on their voting too, because otherwise they'll outvote us—the circuit clerk needs all the help he can get in turning away voters. A couple of good friends of mine," he concluded, "are big men in the Councils. Why don't we have them down here to talk to us so we can organize?"

"That sounds pretty good, Reid," the mayor said, "How about it?" And there was a low murmur from the gathering—perhaps it was of people saying no just softly enough to make it sound like yes.

Bill Hollingsworth protested that Councils could do nothing "that we as citizens can't do. We'll just frighten the Negroes and drive them away, and you and I know that no Negro wants to swim in our pool. We'll make things that much easier for Buchanan to poison them."

But it was too late. The WCC came to Clifford, as it did to most neighboring communities. Anyone who wanted to could disagree. The way to disagree was not to join. A professor from a state college appeared in Clifford the following week to lend respectability to the formation of the new Council and to attack the Supreme Court as a corrupt political body doomed to extinction.

But the membership drive was not very successful—only about one hundred men responded. All the young lawyers in Clifford joined except one (who said he favored segregation, but refused to be associated with an extra-legal group). Some merchants joined, some didn't. Hardly a ready-to-wear owner did—because their customers are mostly Negro, and because they know that the boycott may become a two-edged sword. School officials dodged the issue by offering to "cooperate" with the Council, but the ministers, with one rather rabid exception, would have nothing to do with it. A few of the county's largest farmers and a few of the town's wealthy men joined because they have a good deal at stake.

Since there were still some misgivings about the Council, no one, not even Reid Walles, wanted complete responsibility for it. Consequently a dupe was made chairman—a little-known man who liked the title and could be easily led.

But the failure of the Council to dominate the town is not as encouraging to moderates as might appear. So far the Negroes have taken no official action to implement the Supreme Court decisions; when they do, membership in the Council will climb. For the time being the Council is content. Its word goes virtually unchallenged in public, and is only attacked indirectly in an occasional sermon.

WHAT made it easy for the Councils to move into Clifford and the other towns was the fact that the Supreme Court decision found such communities unprepared. No one was willing to take charge, for a leader offering even the most moderate program might be repudiated as the climate became worse. Today, citizens in Clifford and elsewhere refuse to serve on PTA groups and school boards, knowing that only trouble can come of their efforts.

Since its formation, the Clifford Council has met regularly once a month, with speakers drawn from a pool maintained by the state WCC. Among its accomplishments was the spreading of rumors to the effect that two of Clifford's most prosperous Negroes, a chicken farmer and a bricklayer, were members of NAACP. A full-scale boycott never developed, although the amount of business done by the chicken farmer and the bricklayer fell off about 40 per cent. But that was precisely the original purpose of the rumors.

Apart from this, the Council placed two men with the circuit clerk to test the eligibility of voters when an election was held in February for a vacant city council post. Earlier the word had been passed along—for the first time in years—that Negroes would not be welcome and only about nine showed up. I asked the clerk if they voted.

"Well no, we tested them pretty hard on the Constitution," he said. "We suggested

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first that they didn't really want to vote this time, but if they insisted, we gave them the usual test and asked a few questions. We asked them who fired first at Lexington, the British or the Americans. If a nigger said British," he grinned, "we told him it was the Americans. If he said Americans, we told him it was the British."

I asked him who did shoot first.

"Hell, I don't know, but it worked. You should have seen those niggers shuffle off."

But the main and most effective weapon of the WCC has been economic pressure. For a militant organization which sees itself as law-abiding and which is fearful of using violence, this is an ideal solution, for it permits aggressive action without disturbing the peace.

"Look," said Nick Roberts of the Yazoo City Citizens Council, explaining why 51 of 53 Negroes who had signed an integration petition withdrew their names, "if a man works for you, and you believe in something, and that man is working against it and undermining it, why you don't want him working for you—of course you don't."

In Yazoo City, in August 1955, the Council members fired signers of the integration petition, or prevailed upon other white employers to get them fired. But the WCC continues to deny that it uses economic force: all the Council did in Yazoo City was to provide information (a full-page ad in the local weekly listing the "offenders"); spontaneous public feeling did the rest.

At the WCC's initial meeting at Indianola, Mississippi, in the summer of 1954, it was decided to isolate and silence white dissenters. The Council organizers knew that the Negroes would need white leadership and help—ministers, editors, school-board members—and it resolved to use social ostracism to deny these to them. In Holmes County, Mississippi, a mass meeting sponsored by the WCC asked Dr. David Minter and Eugene Cox and their families to leave the county. Minter and Cox had been running a cooperative farm for Negroes under the auspices of the Presbyterian church. After the Court decision they were seen as a danger. The Cox and Minter families, however, had never been very much involved with the community, and so they stayed on—in spite of threats and the cancellation of their fire-insurance policies. Nevertheless, Negroes became afraid to come out to their farm, and the two families found themselves isolated. The neighboring minister, a conservative and one of the two men who had defended them at the mass meeting, was transferred out of his parish. (A South Carolina minister lost his church after co-authoring a resolution which denounced economic sanctions against partisans of integration as un-Christian.)

In another Mississippi city, two doctors were told that their white patients would be denied the use of a new hospital unless they agreed not to bring Negro patients even into the segregated wing. (The Council leaders, who expect the Court eventually to abolish segregation in hospitals, believe that the best policy is to keep Negroes out altogether.) And in Clinton, Tennessee, where mob demonstrations greeted the opening of the school year last month, principal D. J. Brittain received so many threatening and abusive telephone calls that he had to change his number.

AMID all this, Southern Jews have felt themselves in an uncomfortable position. The WCC's are not anti-Semitic. Asa Carter's North Alabama Citizens Council is limited to those who believe in the divinity of Jesus, but so far it has been clearly the exception. The Mississippi Councils at one time sent out some anti-Semitic literature, but upon being challenged, Patterson, their leader, quickly apologized. Some of his best Council members, he said, were Jews.

Anti-Semitism is not respectable and the Council movement has more to lose than gain by flirting with it. When, at a rally in Memphis, a speaker remarked that "The NAACP is the worst organization to come along since the one that crucified Christ—and I may as well say it—it's the same organization," the *Commercial Appeal*, a rather conservative paper, attacked the meet-

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ing for its anti-Semitic overtones, and the next day the head of the Council issued a lengthy apology. But under different circumstances the Councils could easily become a rallying ground for hatred of all minorities.

For the Southern Jew the real problem has been what to do when asked to join the Councils. Some—a small minority—have joined willingly and enthusiastically out of conviction; a few join and serve in order not to be singled out for attention. But many, many others are faced with an immense moral and economic dilemma. They may try to stall when invited by the Council, but if the Council persists, as it frequently does, the Jew must take his chances.

"I did it with a heaviness I never did anything else with before," a Jew, head of one of the five Jewish families in a town of 12,000, told me. "This is my home and I want to stay here. I gave them my money and now maybe they'll forget about it. I didn't feel I could stay here and not join."

Another Jew, who did not join, scanned the main street of the Delta town where he lived and said: "I lost friends, I'm sure of that, and maybe some business, but I felt I just couldn't do this. I tried to explain to them that while we shared much in this community, the Jewish tradition would make it impossible for me to do this. I think some understood. Others, I guess, won't want to."

Rabbi Perry Nussbaum, of Jackson, Mississippi, summarized the Jew's position: "In the Delta area of our state, where the Jewish merchant is pressured into taking sides, I would be the last to ask him to make a martyr of himself and his family and prepare to move when he is compelled to join a Citizens Council. But I am against Jews joining in larger communities."

Rabbi Nussbaum's statement points to the important fact that the Councils' strength is at maximum in the smaller Deep South communities, and dwindles wherever communities grow larger. The weapons of the Councils are almost completely ineffective in big cities—a fact that bodes ill for the future of the movement, since the South is becoming more and more urbanized. Moreover, with industrialization, labor unions will probably come to represent a major threat to the Councils. This is recognized by no less a Council member than Judge Tom Brady of Mississippi, author of *Black Monday*, who sent a letter to the Mississippi Manufacturers' Association last year suggesting that the Councils and the MMA team up, "mix in a little demogoguery" and beat unionization with the race issue. The MMA turned him down.

But the political strength of the Councils—even in big cities—does not lie in numbers. While they have been unsuccessful in electing Federal officials (as distinct from state representatives and state senators) of their own, and while rabid pro-segregation candidates (like James D. Johnson of Arkansas who received a bad licking in a recent gubernatorial election) have failed, the Councils have been able to force political aspirants generally into more extreme racist positions.

But above all else, the very existence of the Councils has had the effect of suspending freedom of speech in many areas. This is perhaps their most alarming achievement—to have robbed the South of the open discussion of the torturing problems that it so desperately needs. Before the advent of the Councils a man who spoke up against Jim Crow merely ran the risk of being known as a radical; today he faces an organized network of groups consciously working to remove dissenters—his job and his family's happiness may be at stake.

It has been difficult to criticize the WCC openly, and opponents of the movement have contented themselves with attacking not what the Councils are, but what they might become. "When they first started," Grover Hall, editor of the Montgomery *Advertiser*, wrote, "we called them manicured Ku Kluxers. But we had to back down. I don't think they are anything like that and I hope they won't become anything like that." Because of its pretension to respectability, the WCC has had to bow to and swallow criticism of acts of violence committed by its adherents. When four members of the North

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Alabama Citizens Council assaulted Negro singer Nat (King) Cole in Birmingham they drew maximum penalties, and got little sympathy from editors or private citizens.

But this fall the Councils, or at least the Asa Carter Council, finally came out into the open. The principal of Clinton High School in Tennessee, D. J. Brittain, was anticipating no trouble at the start of the current school year, even though Negroes—by court order—were entering the school for the first time. "The people are taking this very well, they aren't getting excited or bothered much about it," he said. "Most of our people don't like it, but they know there's nothing else we can do and they're accepting it. The only trouble seems to be threats from outsiders in Middle and West Tennessee."

Because Tennessee is considered a strategic state by Council leaders, the move toward integration at Clinton—the first in a state-supported school—attracted considerable attention from their quarter, and particularly from Asa Carter of Alabama. This was before the rioting broke out and the National Guard came in.

John Kasper, a friend of Asa Carter, a disciple of Ezra Pound, and a resident of Washington, D.C., suddenly arrived in Clinton and announced that he would do everything possible to stop integration. He conducted a house-to-house campaign urging parents to keep their children out of the high school. He suggested picket lines. He spoke in inflammatory language, inciting the people to defiance. Eventually he landed in jail—but only after he had achieved his purpose. (Asa Carter himself visited Clinton to help things along, and the Tennessee Federation for Constitutional Government did its share.)

But what is significant for the future of the Councils is the split that took place within the white community itself on the issue of the riots. The mob was composed of rural people, youths (many of them teen-agers), and coal miners from an area where unemployment has been frequent. It combined a spirit of disorder for disorder's sake with some deep-rooted racial prejudice and, finally, in the case of the miners, a sense of complete frustration. A *Life* photographer who was manhandled by the crowd said, "Those people weren't just mad at the Negroes or integration—they were mad at everybody in the world, things have been going badly and they could let off some hate."

This is not typically the spirit of the WCC. The average segregationist, men like Buford Lewallen, son of the mayor of Clinton, who has for so long fought the NAACP in court, opposed the mob. And the auxiliary police, which tried to maintain order until the arrival of the National Guard, included the bulk of the civic luncheon club—a group that serves as the base of the Citizens Council in many towns, including Clinton.

The local editor, H. V. Wells, declared that Clinton had been willing to obey the law: "It was on this basis that the school made plans to open, and proof of the fact that a majority of the people feel that way is evidenced by the fact that there were 803 students present for classes—in spite of the picket line, in spite of all the trouble that had been brought to the community by a man who has no interest in the community, no faith in our government, and no belief in the orderly processes of the law—by his own admission."

There was also a feeling throughout Tennessee—except in the most rabid circles—that the riot had hurt Clinton far more deeply than the admission of twelve Negroes to the school could ever have done. And everyone knew that the mob action had provided ammunition for the WCC's enemies.

This, then, is the problem which the Citizens Councils with their program of "all legal means" must eventually face. The movement will either have to renounce violence altogether or give up its aura of respectability and start really fighting in the open. Right now the Councils are a determined and sincere group; but in the long run they may prove more determined than sincere.

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SOVIET POLICY AND JEWISH FATE

In Russia and in Israel

WALTER Z. LAQUEUR

IT TOOK almost three years after Stalin's death to find out what had happened to the Jews of the Soviet Union during what was almost as fateful a period of Jewish history as that which unfolded under the curse of Hitler. And though the events taking place in Russia between 1950 and 1953 have only an indirect connection with the present hostile Soviet attitude toward Israel, it is nonetheless a significant one. Both in the case of its treatment of the Russian Jews, and of its hostile policy toward Israel, Moscow has been able to pull the wool over the eyes of Jews outside the Communist world; it has moved against Jewish rights and interests with a freedom that it would not have had, and would not today retain vis-à-vis Israel, if Western and Israeli Jewry had protested energetically enough against the first signs of anti-Semitic "opportunism" on the Kremlin's part.

The campaign in the Soviet press several years ago against "cosmopolitans" gave an inkling of what was taking place, but it was only in the autumn of 1953, with the publication of Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *The Thaw* (which has given its name to the present period of Soviet history), that a real glimpse was afforded of what ordinary Soviet citizens of Jewish birth went through during the last years of Stalin's rule. And in 1954 came the first indications that the "thaw" itself was beginning to affect them. The climate of fear in which Soviet Jews had been living was eased, the ban on Jewish cultural activities relaxed, and from Leningrad to Tashkent occasional "evenings of Jewish song" (or "Jewish humor") were reported. At the same time, a few Soviet Jews, most of them elderly, were permitted to emigrate in order to join their families, in Israel and elsewhere. There were some other signs of a Soviet change of heart as far as Jews were concerned, which were made the most of by the Communist and fellow-traveling press in the world outside. The very fact, however, that so much was made of these signs should have startled more people into a suspicion of the nature of the situation this change of heart was supposed to remedy.

Only in the past year, however, and especially in the seven or eight months since the 20th Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, has enough information emerged to enable us to form a real picture of the situation of Soviet Jewry, past and present. Rabbinical delegations, journalists, and private individuals have visited the Soviet Union, and news and comment have come from diplomatic and political sources. The delegation of French Socialists that visited Russia this past summer had much to report on the plight of the Jews there. And Soviet spokesmen themselves have become less reticent on the subject, though all they have given us so far are bits and pieces of information.

THE picture that has finally emerged is a very somber one, shocking even the most hardened Communists and fellow-travelers

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SOVIET anti-Semitism in the past has turned out to be a much larger phenomenon than even anti-Communists feared, and in its light the present Soviet hostility to Israel and friendliness to the Arabs seems to become all the more ominous, as WALTER Z. LAQUEUR suggests in this article. Mr. Laqueur is a regular contributor to these pages, in which he last appeared in August, with "The Oren Case." Born in Germany, he went to Palestine in 1938, but is now on a prolonged stay in England, where he edits *Soviet Culture*, an information series, for the Congress of Cultural Freedom.

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and exceeding the wildest fears of anti-Communists. The most rabid of the latter would not have expected Stalin actually to execute the *majority* of Yiddish writers in the USSR (all of whom were good Stalinists, moreover). Since these things have been revealed some Communist leaders in the West have been asking for explanations. But Stalin's heirs, while ready to make certain amends, have refused to make any explanations on this score.

Russian translations of the writings of Perez Markish and Itzik Fefer, two of the executed Yiddish writers, are now appearing in the Soviet Union; a pension has been granted to Markish's widow, and an almanac of Yiddish writing has been announced; next year a Yiddish newspaper may appear and a Jewish theater re-open. But the Soviet authorities still won't say *why* Markish and Fefer were killed—or, for that matter, even permit the fact itself to be mentioned in the press.

Stalin's heirs have been ready to admit that there were sundry "deviations from the norms of democratic procedure" under his rule, and they have denounced the "cult of the individual" (a misnomer if there ever was one), but they have been loath so far to charge Stalin with anti-Semitism. When Hugh Gaitskell, British Labor party leader, asked Khrushchev and Bulganin in London about anti-Semitism in Russia, they blandly denied its existence, professing not to know what he was talking about. (That the French Socialists who visited the USSR likewise raised the question of anti-Semitism may help account for Moscow's recently renewed attacks on the Socialist parties of Western Europe.) On other occasions the Soviet leaders have indeed admitted the existence of anti-Semitism in the USSR in the past, but put all the blame on Beria. The small amount of trustworthy information we possess does not bear them out in this: in 1952, the year of the worst excesses against Jews, the direction of internal security affairs was out of Beria's hands, and upon his return to power in March of 1953 one of his first acts was to release and exonerate the Jewish (and other) physicians involved in the Moscow "doctors' plot."

I

WE HAVE a pretty good idea of what went on in Russia between 1950 and 1953, and it can be left to historians to document that time of horror in detail. Right now information about the present plight of the Soviet Union's Jews and about the new "collective" leadership's attitude toward them is of greater urgency. It is essential to the fate of these Jews that Jews elsewhere form a correct picture of their situation.

The tendency for years has been to assess Jewish life in the Soviet Union mainly from the point of view of Yiddish culture, on the one hand, and religious freedom on the other. These points of view are valid, but it has been wrong to make them practically the only ones.

The issue as regards Yiddish writing in Russia has been one of principle, not of intrinsic value. To judge from the posthumously published poetry of Fefer and Markish, and translations that have recently appeared in Soviet magazines of the verse and prose of such surviving Yiddish writers as Vergelis and Sternberg, it would be hard to say that their work contributes greatly to world literature or to the Jewish people.* Aside from its rather mediocre quality, the content of that much of it that has been published so far is not Jewish. In fact, this writing is hardly distinguishable from most of the work that has appeared in Russian translation by writers belonging to the less important national minorities of the Soviet Union, or from the effusions of Russian provincial authors. Thus the present state-sponsored revival of Yiddish literature, now

*The posthumous rehabilitation of Isaac Babel [many of whose stories have been published in translation in COMMENTARY—ED.] is a different matter. Babel wrote in Russian, and he was purged in 1936, long before the Yiddish writers. Among other exceptions is Alexander Isbah, another Jew writing in Russian, who was silenced in the late 40's for treating "Jewish nationalist motives." Isbah is now being published again, but appears to be dealing with different subjects.

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that the best Yiddish writers are dead, is largely factitious, and more gesture than reality. The number of people interested in a third-rate Yiddish writing totally devoid of Jewish content must be limited indeed. This is what Soviet spokesmen themselves have been saying for quite some time, and they are probably right. No doubt a freer Yiddish literature that could deal with Jewish subjects would attract more readers. But even so, to judge from the fate of Yiddish literature in the last generation in the United States and elsewhere, it would be wrong to make Communism *totally* responsible for the decline of Yiddish writing in Russia. The fact is that specifically Jewish cultural life seems to be fighting a more or less losing battle almost everywhere nowadays.

Nor has their religion retained its old importance for the majority of Soviet Jews. Rabbi Morris N. Kertzer, director of the American Jewish Committee's Department of Jewish Communal Affairs, who visited Russia this past summer as head of a seven-man delegation from the New York Board of Rabbis, reported in the New York *Times* that he did not see a single Jew under thirty-five praying at the dozen or so synagogue services he attended. And Rabbi George B. Lieberman, the only Russian-speaking member of the same delegation, said: "It soon became obvious to me, when entering the Great Synagogue of Moscow, that I was standing on the threshold of death."

Religion in general continues to be actively discouraged in the USSR, but what is less known is that the different religions are by no means all dealt with in the same way. As the most favored, the Orthodox, or Pravoslav, Church, which was Russia's official church under the Czars, and Islam are given preferential treatment. Judaism and Roman Catholicism receive the opposite.

The reasons for this discrimination are too complicated to go into here, though they are no mystery. The Pravoslav Church, a few Protestant denominations, Islam, and some other creeds are permitted to maintain statewide organizations of congregations, operate seminaries, publish their own periodicals, send delegations abroad, convene all-Soviet meetings, and so forth. Soviet Judaism is allowed none of these things. Perhaps this situation will be eased in the future—a few years ago even rabbinical delegations from abroad would have been unthinkable. But even if the hopes now being held out by the Soviet authorities, as expressed informally by high officials of the Council of Cults to Rabbi David Hollander, leader of the Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America's delegation to the USSR, are all fulfilled, the synagogue in Russia will only receive *some* of the "privileges" that the Pravoslav Church enjoyed even before Stalin died. These will certainly not suffice to keep the Jewish religion alive in Russia outside a small number of pious Jews whom the authorities tolerate because they are considered ineffectual. And it is unrealistic to hope for more far-reaching concessions on this score, since the extinction of Judaism is precisely what Soviet policy intends.

Nor is the responsibility of Communism for the decline of the Jewish faith in Russia attenuated, as its responsibility for the decline of Yiddish culture is, by circumstances beyond state control. Despite the anti-religious tenor of Soviet education, religion in general would in all probability fare no better or worse in Russia than it does in the West today were it not for the many official sanctions and administrative prohibitions which make it highly unwise (to say the least) for any Soviet subject with a career in mind to attend synagogue or church, or show any interest whatsoever in religion.

But if most of the Jews of the Soviet Union no longer care for Yiddish or any other specifically Jewish kind of culture, and if most of them have lost interest in religion, why is it that, according to all the evidence, they are more highly "Jewish-conscious" than almost any other Jews in the world today? Talking with Soviet Jews themselves and with observers who spent many years in the USSR, I have found it impossible to get a clear definition of this new "Jewish consciousness," but it can be best described as

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a vague feeling of common origin, of somehow belonging together, of sharing certain "relics of the past"—such as a few Hebrew words, a few Jewish tunes—in other words, it is a kind of "collective memory," fragmentary though it be. Yet in the main, the new "Jewish consciousness" of Soviet Jews must be defined as a response, sheerly, to social and—sometimes—political anti-Semitism. Because it lacks positive meaning, it is a tragic response: people feel themselves to belong together without knowing why.

Social anti-Semitism, both from above and below, was palpable under Stalin. Jews were purged, because they were Jews, from the Foreign Service and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, from the upper echelons of the Red Army, of the political police, and of the party machine. There were many other instances in other spheres of Soviet life of discrimination against Jews and, according to reliable evidence, the fundamental situation has changed but little since then. There are still a few highly placed Jews in the USSR: and their names were cited by Mikoyan in answer to a direct question put by members of the delegation of French Socialists. David Reiser has an office in one of the "technical" ministries, and a Jewish colonel general is said to be stationed in Sverdlovsk, or some such place this side of the Urals. Lazar Kaganovich, one of Stalin's side-kicks, and lately appointed head of the building industry, was not mentioned by Mikoyan, either because he is on his way out or because it is thought undesirable to advertise the fact that he is Jewish. There are no apparent restrictions against Jews in such fields as science, technology, and the management of industrial and commercial enterprises, but Jews seem to choose—wisely perhaps—not to hold too prominent positions there, preferring in many cases to be deputies of bosses rather bosses themselves.

In defending themselves against charges of anti-Semitism, Soviet spokesmen have argued recently, in private conversation, that there were no highly placed Jews in the British government either, or in its Foreign Service; that there were none or hardly any among France's generals; and that there was an unofficial *numerus clausus* for Jews in American universities. What makes this argument so hollow is that, even apart from the ban on Jewish nationalism and culture, the *average* Jew, according to all the evidence, is exposed to far more social anti-Semitism in the Soviet world than he is in the democratic West. And in any case: since when has the capitalist West been a yardstick by which Communists measure themselves? Or, to put it more correctly, since when has the West furnished an example of the *ideal* which they are satisfied to attain? The discrepancy in the Soviet world between theory—"proletarian internationalism"—and practice is all too blatant here.*

SINCE Lenin's time nothing has embarrassed, and infuriated, the Kremlin more than to have attention called to the divergencies between ideal and reality in the Soviet world. The recent exposures of anti-Semitism in Russia have created a situation that has the character of a test case—especially in view of the fact that the most outrageous of all the outrageous features of Hitler fascism—of which the Soviet Union professes to be the only true antithesis—was precisely its anti-Semitism. Jews have benefited from the recent "thaw," but that "thaw" itself has been a strictly limited one, and Soviet Jews have benefited less by it than most others have.

Nor does the attempt to unload the responsibility for the anti-Semitic campaign of 1950-53 on the corpse of Beria and, by implication, on that of Stalin argue much for the good faith of the present rulers of the USSR. Khrushchev has revealed that Stalin entertained the idea of deporting all the Jews of the Soviet Union to a desert region, but he let this out only after having been

*A standard Communist argument used to be that the USSR was the only country on earth where anti-Semitism was punishable by law. This is true, but not a single case of any one's being prosecuted under this law in the Soviet Union has come to light in the last twenty years. Nor did it deter Stalin from executing the Jewish writers.

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himself accused of anti-Semitism. (At a session of the Central Committee of the Polish Communist party in Warsaw last March, he is reported to have said that "you have too many Rosenblums here," and to have argued against naming Roman Zambrowski as Bierut's successor because he was a Jew. Furthermore he, as well as Mrs. Yekaterina A. Furtseva, is reported to have expressed himself in private as favoring a *numerus clausus* for Jews in certain fields of Soviet activity.)

Soviet Jews can now breathe more freely. They are back, or should be—if all the recently proclaimed promises are carried out—where they were in 1946. There is no longer any concerted drive against "cosmopolitans"; Jewish writers are no longer being shot; and though people may still get up to five years in jail for having Hebrew newspapers in their possession (the last such case was reported in March of 1956), no new show trials involving Jews are in preparation. The leadership of the Russian Communist party still reveals anti-Semitic feeling now and then, but this is not inspired from above. Compared with 1952, the present state of affairs might almost be called idyllic.

Nonetheless, the basic causes that still give Soviet Jews reason to fear for themselves have not disappeared. Just as a recurrence of "Stalinism" continues to be a possibility as long as no fundamental changes are made in the structure of the Soviet regime, so a recurrence of rabid anti-Semitism remains possible—particularly should the international situation deteriorate. Nor has de-Stalinization changed Soviet dogma on the "Jewish question." The Jews are still supposed to renounce all their ethnic, cultural, and religious ties and traditions, and assimilate themselves to some "Soviet" prototype which is no more a reality than a "Soviet" language is. Yet no one has proposed that the Great Russians should assimilate themselves to the same "Soviet" prototype and stop using the language of Pushkin and Tolstoy.

And yet the total assimilation of the Soviet Jews, while desired in theory, is made impossible in practice. Even if it were not written on his official card of identity, the Soviet Jew would remain aware that he was different. Contrary to the impression of many people, the Soviet Union is not at all a melting pot. In the last decades Soviet leadership has occupied itself very little with the relations of nationalities, on the assumption that these would somehow work themselves out without state intervention. But as far as the Jews of the USSR are concerned, an impasse has been reached. The younger generation of Soviet Jews accept it as a fact that they are different from Gentile Russians, and it is no mystic voice in their blood that says so, but Comrade Khrushchev himself.

IN RECENT months contacts between Jews in Russia and those in the "popular democracies" have increased. At one time in 1955 it looked as though the wartime Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee in Moscow might be resurrected; a congress to protest against German rearmament (West German rearmament, to be sure) was held in Paris—but Soviet Jewry could not send delegates to even this party-controlled affair. Later, there were reports that official representatives of the Jewries of the satellite countries wanted to join the World Jewish Congress, but again Soviet Jewry was left out. Then when Nahum Goldman, president of the WJC, inquired about a reported official invitation to him to come to Moscow, it turned out that it had all been a misunderstanding: Dr. Goldman, or others of his organization, could visit Moscow if they wished, but only as private tourists. The sole official invitations were to the representatives of Jewish religious organizations.*

*The Communist Yiddish daily in New York, the *Morning Freiheit*, complained on September 16, 1956, that so far the synagogue still seems to be the only "Jewish address in the Soviet Union." The *Freiheit's* article in general was illuminating as to the depth and extent of the reaction of Jewish Communists to the recent revelations of anti-Semitism in the USSR. The *Freiheit* dared, as the New York *Times* put it a day later, "rebuke" the press chief of the Soviet Foreign Ministry for denouncing as "slanderous and anti-Soviet" the now famous account of the liquida-

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Any increase of contacts with the Jewish communities of the Communist world is to be welcomed, but ambassadors of good will can do harm as well as good, and each should be equipped with a handbook containing basic information about the way in which the countries they intend visiting are ruled. This applies in particular to those visitors to the USSR who do not know Russian and have to rely on official interpreters in making direct contact with Russian Jews. Sometimes even those who do know the language get, or let themselves be, taken in.

A typical example of an attempt to "rescue" East European Jews from their isolation was that of Rabbi Kurt Wilhelm of Stockholm, who traveled to Rumania in February 1955, and told Bucharest reporters that he was "greatly impressed by the generous freedom under which every citizen of the Rumanian Peoples Republic can live and do his duty to himself and the Republic. As a Jew I wish to state my view that, for the first time, the Jew in Rumania has been emancipated. This freedom existed before, but only *de jure*, today it is *de facto*. I could see Jewish life, the Jewish spirit. . . . I have been impressed by working conditions in Rumania, and by the great will to peace everywhere." Rumania, according to Communists and non-Communists alike, happens to be the most backward of all the "popular democracies" as far as political freedom, living standards, the popularity of the regime, and the progress of de-Stalinization are concerned. Under these circumstances, such fulsome praise of the regime as Rabbi Wilhelm's only makes the visitor from abroad look foolish.

The stories of several other Jewish visitors returned from behind the Iron Curtain betray a naivety and an ignorance that are equally startling. Thus Mrs. Esther Seager, a justice of the peace and deputy mayor of Smethwick in England, could write in one of a series of reports by her featured in the London *Jewish Chronicle* (August 17, 1956):

> I asked about the present position of Jewish writers and was told that many were now active. Asking for names, the people I met quoted Grossman, Imber, Svetlov, Granin, Marshack, Erenburg [*sic*], Ilya Selvinski, Antokolski, Boris Pasternak, and Margarita Aliger. Whether these write in the Yiddish idiom or on Jewish subjects I am not personally competent to judge, being a student neither of Russian or Yiddish literature, but possibly some of the names give some reassurance to those to whom the recent reports of the wrongful executions under Stalin gave so much pain. . . .

All these are names of well-known Soviet writers of Jewish origin who write neither in Yiddish nor on Jewish subjects; there had never been any doubt outside Russia that they were still alive. Was Mrs. Seager never told that what was really at issue in the execution of the Yiddish writers was the fact that they wrote in a tongue that belonged solely to Jews? And why should the survival of Ilya Ehrenburg (or Erenburg), one of Stalin's most vicious literary hatchetmen, reassure Jews elsewhere? Nevertheless, Mrs. Seager concludes her story with the observation, "Although they are better off, Soviet Jews fear that Stalinism may reappear. I was myself not entirely free from being watched when I made my contacts."

II

THE Kremlin's policy toward its Jewish subjects cannot be separated from its attitude to the Jewish communities outside the USSR. Certainly, one of the important motives behind the recent easing of anti-Jewish policy in the USSR is the wish to create a favorable impression among American and Western European Jews. Yet one of the probable reasons why the Soviet leaders have felt it necessary to go slow with these conces-

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tion of Yiddish culture and its outstanding figures that appeared in the Communist Yiddish paper, *Folksshtimme*, in Warsaw last April. This article was the first to shake Jewish and other Communists in the West and convince them of the truth of the fact that anti-Semitism had been carried on officially in the Soviet Union. The *Freiheit* also protested at the lack of information about what was happening to the surviving Soviet Yiddish writers who are now being "rehabilitated," and at the fact that their persecution in the past had still not been given publicity inside the Soviet Union itself.

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sions is the existence of Israel. Israel apparently exerts a great attraction on very many Jews in Russia, and one that the Soviet leaders view as highly undesirable. And though the plight of Soviet Jews has been somewhat relieved, the Soviet attitude toward Israel has become steadily more hostile in the last year.

The campaign against Israel started in the Soviet press when the Czechs made their arms deal with Egypt in the autumn of 1955. Since then Soviet support of the Arabs against Israel has become systematic and almost complete. At least once every two weeks the "bellicose ruling circles" of Israel are denounced for preparing to attack their peace-loving Arab neighbors in order to put pressure on them to join the Western "aggressive" bloc. Israel is called the real cause of the present tension in the Middle East, as though she were some Middle Eastern Formosa or South Korea—an "imperialist pawn being used to sabotage the struggle for freedom and independence of the progressive Arab governments." And so on. Nor has Soviet aid to the Arabs been confined to words and modern arms: real political support has been given them. In view of the avowed Arab intention to "wipe Israel out," Soviet intervention in the Middle East has now become a mortal danger to the young state.

What are the reasons for this turn on the part of Soviet foreign policy? Though the Soviet leaders have never been philo-Semites or pro-Zionist, it cannot be held that any issue of principle, or "ideology," lies behind their present hostility to Israel. Soviet leadership thinks in terms of power politics, not in those of lofty internationalism. At bottom its Middle Eastern policy is neither pro-Arab nor pro-Israel; it is pro-Soviet. If Israel had twenty million instead of only a million and a half inhabitants, the Soviets might be much friendlier toward her. This is the long and the short of it.

WHENEVER things go badly—and Israel's foreign policy has been going badly for quite a while—there is a strong temptation to criticize people and policies instead of acknowledging circumstances and developments that could not possibly have been changed or averted. Yet there is more than a strong suspicion that the Israeli reaction, both official and unofficial, to the hostile trend of Soviet policy has been wrong for quite some time, and that a more realistic one would have brought about some improvement in Israel's position. The present tendency to let things drift is dangerous and, unless checked, may have fatal consequences.

Israeli foreign policy cannot change the fact that there are no more than a million and a half Jews in Israel, but it could have generated effective counterpressure against the Soviets' unqualified support of the Arabs. Even non-Jewish observers—like the members of the recent French Socialist delegation to Moscow—have gone on record as saying thtat unless Jews in the West succeeded in exerting counterpressure, Soviet support of the Arabs would become even stronger. And so, in effect, it has. It happens that Soviet leadership has become more concerned than ever to placate public opinion in the West, and liberal and left-wing opinion in particular, which is predominantly sympathetic to Israel. Israel could have made things difficult for Moscow simply by making the facts of Soviet policy toward Israel more widely known. This she has conspicuously failed to do.

Communists as well as Socialists in the West have been greatly disturbed by the crimes against Jews committed by and under Stalin, and they are equally troubled by present Soviet policy in the Middle East.

There may be no direct connection in motivation between Stalin's crimes and Moscow's present pro-Arab line, but Communists well know that "objectively" (a basic term for those trained in "dialectical" thinking) the second may have the same consequences as the first: the killing of Jews. The revelation of what happened to Soviet Jewry under Stalin has dealt a great shock to the Communist rank and file in the West—if not, perhaps, their leaders. And again,

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criticism of Russian support of Nasser's semi-fascist regime against the all-socialist government of Israel has been expressed by Communists as well as Socialists.

Jean-Paul Sartre's *Temps Modernes,* a staunchly fellow-traveling magazine, and other French publications of the same hue, have run articles highly critical of Soviet Middle Eastern policy. *Libération,* a French daily the Communists put out for their sympathizers, called the Soviet proposal to exclude Israel from among the nations to be represented in the Suez conference "opportunistic." Pietro Nenni, a man with an unblemished pro-Soviet record up to this year, strongly denounced Nasser's aggressive policy and, by implication, Soviet support of him. A Communist reader of the London *Daily Worker*—to give an illustration of the mood of the rank and file—wrote to it: "Here in Stepney we do not share your admiration for General [*sic*] Nasser, here we are pro-Israel." And he asked the editor whether General Franco was next in line for a whitewashing.*

ALL this would show that a large but untapped reservoir of good will for Israel exists among some Western Communists as well as others. But Israeli foreign policy has not tried to use this good will—or anything else that might compromise the Soviets. Perhaps one of the most spectacular opportunities missed in this regard was offered by an interview Khrushchev recently gave the correspondent of a leading Egyptian newspaper, *Al Ahram.* The text as originally printed was worse than the excerpts published in the West, and quoted Khrushchev as saying that "I do not wish to form an opinion about the future of Israel because the West might use my words and call us warmongers." (We have to assume that these words are authentic, since TASS never hesitates to issue a denial when a Soviet leader has been misquoted.) It is easy to imagine how awkward it would have made things for the Soviet leaders had the text of this interview been given wide publicity in the West. There would have been immediate consequences—and they would have been advantageous to Israel.

The reasons for the Israeli failure to take advantage of chances like these to alert public opinion in the West are complicated. What is at issue is not so much a clearly conceived notion of Israeli-Soviet relations but a state of mind, official and unofficial.

To the extent that it finds coherent expression, the reasoning behind this state of mind goes as follows: Israel is a very small country and the Soviet Union is one of the two greatest powers in the world. By systematically criticizing Soviet policy in the Middle East, Israel would antagonize Moscow even more. In fact, Moscow has been offended ever since she protested against the Communist arms shipments to Egypt. The Israelis would be branded as "cold warmongers," "mad dogs of Wall Street," and so forth. Thus their freedom of action would become even more limited than it is now—and this at a time when American and British foreign policy is cool toward Israel and not concerned in the least whether or not she identifies herself with the West. In addition, there have been some straws in the wind tending to show that the Soviets are reconciled to the existence of Israel: after all, there was that declaration from the Kremlin last April in favor of peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors. A commercial agreement was reached under which the Russians now sell crude oil to Israel. (The Soviet press did not report this treaty for fear,

*There are some exceptions. Several prominent left-wing Labor politicians in Britain have come out in defense of Nasser. Maurice Orbach, a Labor M.P., told a London audience that he had established "a relationship of friendship and sincerity with Colonel Nasser. Nasser was my brother and I was his." This attitude has caused consternation among Jews and lifted eyebrows among non-Jews. Wrote the London *Sunday Express* in an article dated August 26, 1956, on "Britain's Nasserites": "What have Mr. Orbach, M.P. . . . Mr. Sidney Silverman, M.P., Mr. Ian Mikardo, M.P., and Mr. Frank Alaun, M.P., in common? All these men subscribe to the Jewish faith. All call themselves Zionists. . . . Colonel Nasser's overwhelming purpose is the utter destruction of the State of Israel. Is it therefore not fantastic that they should be supporting Nasser?"

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Shepilov said, that undue political significance would be attributed to it.)

Some leading Soviet personalities—this line of reasoning continues—put in an appearance at the Israeli embassy in Moscow on Israel's independence day, and Mikoyan himself took Ambassador Avidar's daughter out on the lake in a rowboat at that famous garden party last summer. Besides all this, Western power and influence is decreasing steadily in the Middle East, while Soviet power is on the rise. Clearly, one cannot afford to offend Russia in these circumstances. As the Tel Aviv correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian* put it on August 7: "The key is seen to rest in Russian hands. The decline of Western prestige engenders inevitably renewed gropings in Israel for some brand of neutralism as yet undiscovered. Disappointment with Washington and London is bound to lead Israel closer towards the Soviet orbit. . . ."

All the Israeli political parties, with the sole exception of the Communist—which is one of the least de-Stalinized Communist parties in the world—have strongly criticized Soviet Middle Eastern policy. Even Mapam and Ahdut Avoda, for all their devotion to the "world of progress," have complained bitterly about the hostile Soviet attitude, and expressed the opinion that the Russians "may yet come to regret their present opportunistic line." But neither Mapam nor Ahdut Avoda has yet given any good reason why the Russians will. For the rest, both parties remain convinced that the Kremlin's present line, though it may have fateful consequences for Israel, is merely an "aberration from the internationalist norm" that will sooner or later be recognized as such and revised.

These illusions are shared to some extent by many people outside these two parties, which is to be accounted for by a variety of factors. One is the well-established fact that Jews are incurable optimists: after all, Russia came out in favor of Israel in 1947-48—why shouldn't she do so again as the result of some unforeseen development? Another factor is the widespread feeling in Israel for Russia, Russian literature, and individual Russians. There is nothing surprising about this: many Jews of the generations that settled Israel contracted Russophilism before they left the Czar's dominions; nor can the importance of the great Russian novelists be disputed, or the amiability of the average Russian.

An unprecedented wave of excitement swept Israel when the Soviet and Israeli soccer teams played each other, first in Moscow and then at Ramat Gan this July, in the preliminary rounds of the Olympic games. A contest with no other nation could have caused that much enthusiasm—or so many editorials in the papers. There was nothing wrong in this enthusiasm, but the conclusions drawn from, and the political significance attributed to, these soccer matches were quite unwarranted.

Lastly, public opinion in Israel is not very well informed about Soviet policy or things Soviet in general. The fellow-traveling London *New Statesman* is the staple source of political enlightenment for countless non-Communist intellectuals in Israel as well as in many other countries east of Suez. The picture this weekly gives of Soviet activity and Soviet motivations may be very persuasive, but has little to do with reality, and the confusion it creates in the minds of uncritical readers—including some in official positions who ought to know better—only serves Moscow's ends.

Some of the fallacies that abound in Israeli political thinking go deep and cannot be discussed here. Others, like the proposed orientation toward an imaginary Asia, or the "gropings for some brand of neutralism as yet undiscovered," are superficial and should perhaps not have undue importance attributed to them: in difficult situations people tend to grasp at all sorts of crankish and illusory panaceas. Those Israelis, for example, who advocate a rapprochement with the Soviets have to realize that this means that Israel would have to survive, if at all, within her 1947 frontiers, and probably under even less favorable conditions. If

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this is thought inevitable, then one would be well advised to return to the 1947 frontiers at once, and voluntarily, which would be preferable to accepting them later under overwhelming pressure. It is remarkable how this dilemma is suppressed by the advocates of a pro-Soviet orientation—out of shortsightedness, if no other reason. The Communists, for once, are more honest on this particular issue, and urge that Israel surrender to the Arab demands forthwith. Other political cogitators pretend to believe that the survival of Israel within her present frontiers can be combined somehow with the alignment of Israeli foreign policy in the same direction as that of the uncommitted or neutralist Asian countries.

WHAT is very true, however, is that Moscow has become the key to many of Israel's problems in the Middle East. Israel's cold-shouldering by Washington and London was largely motivated by the fear that Russia would outmaneuver the West for the sympathies of the Arab world. Washington and London cannot hope to compete with Moscow in its anti-Israeli policy but—so it seems to be believed in the West—they should still not fall too far behind Moscow in courting the Arabs lest the Arabs be propelled even further toward the Soviet side. An improvement in Israeli relations with the West can be expected, therefore, only if Washington and London are given no further reason to fear all-out Soviet support for the Arabs against Israel.

How can Moscow be prevailed upon to moderate its anti-Israeli stand? There are, theoretically at least, two possibilities. One would be a far-reaching rapprochement with Russia. But this is out of the question, even if no issues of principle were involved. Moscow is already too busy wooing the Arabs, and though the Russians may not have anything in principle against friendship with Israel, they know that they cannot have friendship both with her *and* the Arabs—and that the Arabs are far more important.

The only other means of influencing the Russians is to bring all kinds of pressure, direct and indirect, to bear on them. Israel could call attention to how the Soviets violate their own professed standards of internationalism, socialism, and democracy by backing the Arab regimes against Israel. There is good reason to feel that such publicity would not be greatly liked in Moscow. This line of action might not be sufficient to bring about a basic change in Soviet Middle Eastern policy but, if vigorously pursued, it would at least compel the Kremlin to move more cautiously and take a less blatant anti-Israeli line. However, as I have said, no such line of action has been undertaken by Israel as yet. As a result, Soviet policy against her has become increasingly unrestrained—after all, what has Moscow got to fear from her?—while Israel's international position has continued to deteriorate.

Thus the "thaw" in the USSR has given Jews less cause to rejoice than most other people. The situation of Soviet Jews has improved inasmuch as their active persecution has halted. But they are still the victims of discrimination, the Jewish religion is still among the "least favored" in the Soviet Union, and the opposition to most expressions of Jewish national life continues. The few almanacs of Yiddish verse and prose that may be published in coming months, and the "evenings of Jewish humor," will be welcome. But what do they weigh against the jet planes and heavy tanks being supplied by Moscow to governments whose avowed intention is to wipe Israel out? The motives of Soviet policy may have changed since Stalin, and Soviet leadership may have little against the Jews and Israel per se, but it so happens that the Jews and Israel stand in the way of some important projects for the expansion of Soviet influence and power. The outcome, this time, unless something is done about it soon, may be more tragic than anything ever perpetrated by Stalin.

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IS THE INTELLECTUAL OBSOLETE?

The Freely Speculating Mind in America

H. STUART HUGHES

AN ACQUAINTANCE of mine who knows the Soviet Union well is fond of declaring that in the mid-20th century the intellectual has become an anachronism. In the world of advanced industrial society, he argues, the freely speculating mind has lost its function. While I am not inclined to agree unreservedly with my pessimistic friend—whose cast of thought, I must add, leans toward paradox and exaggeration—I am no more willing to reject his argument out of hand. It deserves serious consideration, I believe, particularly in our own country, where the present discontents of intellectuals strongly suggest the possibility that their expectations no longer conform with reality.

In the Communist world the intellectuals' dependence on state and party scarcely needs to be argued. These writers and thinkers themselves are constantly revealing the facts of the matter by taking advantage of periods of relaxation like the present to voice their long repressed complaints. Theoretically, organized Marxism has always favored the intellectual estate; and the leaders of contemporary Communism have followed in the established tradition by combating the normal anti-intellectualism of workingmen and arguing for the ideological solidarity of "workers of brain and hand." Yet the phrase itself betrays the true intention. The brain-workers are to share in the construction of socialist society: like the men on the assembly line, they are to make their proper contribution to the new and better world. In brief—to use a phrase that has a familiar American ring—their efforts find official favor only if they are "constructive."

Hence my friend argues that those whom the Communists call intellectuals are really not intellectuals in the traditional Western sense at all. They are actually no more than "mental technicians." Of course, certain true intellectuals still exist in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe—theoreticians like Eugene Varga and Georg Lukacs to whom the authorities grant a kind of special license. But these are figures of an older generation, whose minds were formed in a freer society. It is questionable, to say the least, whether they have produced any significant number of successors. If, in some remote contingency, the rulers of the Soviet Union were to direct their intellectually trained fellow citizens to speculate with absolute freedom, it would be diverting to see how few of the latter possessed any clear notion of what they were supposed to do.

The small minority of true Communist intellectuals in Eastern Europe can, of course, still speak a common language with their opposite numbers in the West. And the leading Communist intellectuals of Western Europe for the most part maintain relations with non-Communists of similar caliber. These latter in turn have been in regular communication with their fellows in the United States. In some sense, then, even in the period of greatest hostility in Soviet-American relations, the chain of interna-

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AMERICAN intellectuals seem to feel that they have a greater and more special stake in Presidential elections since Stevenson's first candidacy made the "egghead" a political issue. The extent of that stake at the present moment, and in connection with the present campaign, is what, among other things, H. STUART HUGHES considers here. Mr. Hughes is chairman of the department of history at Stanford University. He is presently working on a history of European ideas in the period 1890-1930. Readers will recall his "California—The America to Come" in our May issue, and his review of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Mandarins* in July.

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tional intellectual exchange was never broken. And, since the renewal of Russian contact with the outside world, it has been at meetings in Western Europe that American and Soviet intellectuals have first confronted each other in the flesh.

In terms of the contemporary realities of intellectual life, Western Europe offers the logical meeting ground. For it is there that the traditional definition of the intellectual's calling has been most punctiliously adhered to. In Britain, in Western Germany, in Italy, and more particularly in France, the status of the thinker or writer as an individual enjoying a special set of privileges and a special kind of respect is very nearly the same as it was two generations ago, on the eve of the great catastrophes that have so profoundly shaken European society. Since then the material circumstances of life have changed vastly—but the central role of the intellectual has remained unimpaired.

At the same time one suspects that more has actually altered than has appeared on the surface. The European intellectuals continue to write and speak with the old abundance, and their personal doings make as good news copy as in the past. But they no longer have the same practical effect. Today a writers' manifesto could not possibly precipitate a government crisis or start a revolution. Similarly the efforts of intellectuals to launch new political movements have proved uniformly unsuccessful. From these failures the more honest and perceptive of European writers have begun to draw the deduction that they may be throwing their words into a void—that the old exchange between the intellectual and his public is turning into a weary and repetitious monologue. Few of them are thinking of abandoning their calling; but a great many are searching for a redefinition of it that may give it greater contemporary relevance.

The apathy and lack of understanding for things intellectual of which American writers complain may very well, then, be a contemporary phenomenon extending far beyond the confines of the United States. In fact, the situation in our country may represent some sort of halfway point between the declared hostility to free speculation characteristic of the Soviet Union and the traditional (and increasingly hollow) respect that the public in Western Europe accords. Moreover, there is a genuineness in the American attitude that makes it easier to examine: where few merely inherited reasons exist for pretending to a higher regard for the things of the mind than one actually feels, the realities of the matter emerge with greater sharpness. For purposes of argument, at least, one may suggest that the intellectual situation in the United States presents a kind of paradigm for the whole of industrial society in the 20th century.

INITIALLY it is well to remind ourselves of those things in the American intellectual heritage that have set it off from the European. Here I think we can safely accept my friend's distinction between "mental technicians" and true intellectuals. A distinction of this sort has been implicit in the attitude of Europeans since the role of the free intellectuals first differentiated itself from that of the clergy. When in early modern times the lay thinker and writer began to break the original Church monopoly of intellectual life, he inherited most of the respect and sense of differentiated function that adhered to the priestly status. Although no longer bound by holy orders, he remained a "clerk" in spirit and function. Hence Julien Benda was simply holding true to tradition when thirty years ago he sharply rebuked the modern "clerks" for a betrayal of their historic mission.

It was not, however, all those of mental training who inherited this sort of benefit of clergy. The sense of differentiated status did not apply to physicians, engineers, architects, or technical advisers to government. Only those who performed the *same sort* of functions that the clergy had once monopolized—and, in a more restricted area, continued to perform—enjoyed the latters' special immunity. Only those engaged in abstract speculation, in the posing of gen-

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eral problems of universal concern, were able to make a valid claim to a privileged status.

Moreover, as opposed to technical pursuits on the one hand and to merely personal investigations on the other, the function of the new and the old "clerks" in Europe always bore a *public* character. The respect these individuals enjoyed did not derive simply from the splendor of their mental operations: it reflected their position as the custodians of the higher values of society. As the Church had once enunciated the general principles that were to guide public conduct, as the clerically dominated universities had elaborated the rules of argumentation and served as the guardians of orthodoxy, so from the 16th century on the new class of lay intellectuals began to elaborate a richer and less confined pattern of behavior to offer to their fellow citizens. When Erasmus or Bacon wrote he did not write for a narrow coterie of intellectuals: he spoke to the princes and governing elite of Europe.

It was only by a series of slow and cautious adaptations that this definition of public responsibility began to be widened into a concept of the liberty of the intellectual to speculate without restraint on the frontiers of knowledge. The modern idea of the complete freedom of the mind certainly does not much antedate Milton—and even Milton, we may remember, showed no tolerance toward Papists and atheists. In fact, it is doubtful whether such an idea could ever have won its way at all if those who advanced it had not been surrounded by some of the sanctified respect derived from their clerical origin, and, concomitantly, if it had not been implied that the claimants to intellectual freedom would always be comparatively few in number.

And so by the 18th century there had come about that radical change that converted the characteristic European intellectual from a defender and rationalizer of existing institutions into their implacable critic. This latter role is so familiar to us today that we seldom stop to recall that it represented nearly a complete reversal of the older function. Throughout the century and a half immediately preceding our own era it was generally assumed that the most alert and active section of the intelligentsia would be engaged in what Joseph Schumpeter called "nibbling away at the foundations of society." And this is still what an old-type European intellectual like Jean-Paul Sartre thinks that he is about.

NEVER in its history—except perhaps briefly in the 1930's and early 1940's—did the United States conform to this European model. Starting from a similar clerical monopoly of intellectual leadership, the American colonies never developed a true intellectual caste. When the domination of Protestant divines was shaken off, no native-grown intelligentsia stepped into their place. In the early days of the Republic, the life of the mind was still inextricably entangled with statesmanship: one has only to think of Franklin and Jefferson and John Quincy Adams. Later there appeared the sages of Concord and the wits of Manhattan—but they never formed a homogeneous class exerting a cumulative influence on a national scale. Until the 20th century the educated American might be a statesman or a preacher, a *littérateur* or a technician, but only a handful of isolated figures such as Henry Adams behaved like intellectuals in the European sense.

It was Henry Adams who in the 1870's trained some of the first American Ph.D.'s. The creation of a substantial group of individuals with doctor's degrees brought the United States closer to European conditions. For the man endowed with an academic doctorate—and usually with a job that he considered unworthy of his talents—had become a kind of type figure in the Continental intelligentsia. Simultaneously the American institutions of higher learning began to convert themselves into universities in the European sense: professors ceased to be mere pedagogues and sought to supplement their teaching with independent thought and investigation. Yet in the popu-

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lation at large the older attitude still dominated: the characteristic young man of brains and promise became a "mental technician" rather than an intellectual. It is symptomatic that today the physician ranks higher than the professor or writer in the scale of public prestige.

HENCE the substantial influence that American intellectuals enjoyed in the period from 1933 to 1945 was something unprecedented in our history. And it is not surprising that it proved rather heady to modest professors who suddenly found themselves pulled out of quiet campuses into the bustle and excitement of Washington. What is not so justifiable, however, is the fashion in which many of them began to take their new situation for granted and to treat it as their normal due. In this case the wisdom of Napoleon's mother—*"pourvou que ça doure"*—would have been a more sensible attitude. Once the extraordinary conditions of depression and war were over—and once a corps of technical career administrators had been trained to fill the gaps in the service for which it had been necessary to improvise talent from the outside—the more normal American attitude toward direction by intellectuals quite predictably resumed its sway.

In judging the anti-intellectualism of the last decade, then, it is important to separate what is truly new and threatening from what is merely the reassertion of an earlier and more usual attitude. Certainly at least part of the American intellectual's sense of endangered status stems from an exaggerated notion of what that status had actually become. It was not true—as both the critics and the defenders of the intellectuals frequently seemed to assert—that a group of doctrinaire thinkers and professors had held the destiny of the country literally in their hands. Nor was it true that any but a tiny minority of them had consciously sought positions of influence. Rather they had accepted, often with reluctance, duties that their country had urged upon them. And these they had accomplished with conscientiousness, if necessarily in somewhat amateurish fashion. When the crisis—or rather, series of crises—was over, they were dropped from the service or, more usually, left of their own accord, drawn away by nostalgia for the campus and the sense that there was no longer interesting or useful work in Washington to be performed.

Thus when American intellectuals voice their grievances—and I would be the last to deny that many of these grievances are very real—they would do well to omit the charge of ingratitude on the part of their government. They would do well to combat in themselves the sense of hurt feelings that has produced the two equally undignified attitudes of recrimination and self-flagellating apology for past errors of judgment. It would be far better for them to remember that they were neither obliged nor entitled by right to work for the government: they chose of their own free will to serve the state and in so doing they took certain inevitable risks. They stuck their heads into the lion's den and it was only to be expected that now and then the lion would bite.

Finally, American intellectuals would do well to recall that in their government service they did not function *as intellectuals* but as "mental technicians." They had assigned jobs to do: they were not free to speculate as their fancy directed. Or, if they did choose to speculate in academic fashion, they ran the danger of going astray and of saying or doing something that in retrospect would look rather foolish. In short, by serving their country they lost some of their independence. Again, *as intellectuals,* their position was diminished rather than enhanced. And the same is true of those who in the postwar period have accepted the favors of government or of business. The intellectuals who in the years after 1945 retired from public service and returned to far lower incomes in teaching or writing displayed a surer sense of where their own peculiar values could best be cultivated. Without his freedom to speculate at will, they saw, the intellectual could function only haltingly.

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IN THE period from the Presidential election of 1952 to the Congressional election of 1954, the American intellectuals closed their ranks and manifested an unprecedented corporate solidarity. For the first time in recent history the intellectual leadership of the country in its overwhelming majority backed a single political party. Earlier, in the depression and war years, American writers and professors had divided along the usual political cleavages: while the most vocal and active of their number had supported the New Deal, a relatively quiet minority had remained Republican and a smaller although more advertised minority had espoused Communism or near-Communism. By 1952, both left and right had disappeared. Overnight virtually everyone seemed to have become a Stevenson Democrat.

The unity of the years 1952 to 1954 reflected a clear sense of a very real danger. It suggested that American intellectuals had at last come of age and knew how to go about defending the values that gave their lives meaning. They had correctly sensed that the agitation directed by Senator McCarthy and his like struck at the whole notion of free inquiry, and that supporting the Democratic party offered the only realistic method of hitting back. For it was apparent that the Republican leadership was "soft," to say the least, toward the enemies of intellectual values, and that if elected to office it would give no very reliable protection to the personal security of the writer or scholar.

The conduct of the Eisenhower administration during the first part of its tenure proved this assumption correct. And the changes that have occurred since 1954 have largely come about independently of or even against the will of the administration. In an election year one may indulge the congenital inclination to set the record straight by recalling that it was not the President or his immediate advisers that reduced McCarthy to impotence, but rather a group of Senators only loosely associated with the administration and backed up by a gradual revulsion of public sentiment. One may add that the Republicans notably extended the range of arbitrary security procedures until they were brought up short, not by a spontaneous attack of conscience, but by a series of peremptory orders from the Federal courts. This is all a matter of record: except in the vague sense of exuding a spirit of fairness and eliminating the main pretext for civic bitterness by bringing the Korean war to an end, President Eisenhower cannot be held responsible for the freer intellectual atmosphere of the past two years.

In fact, what has occurred has not been so dramatic as the self-congratulations of Americans would lead one to believe. The personalization of the threat to intellectual freedom under the name of "McCarthyism" has obscured its true nature and extent. Senator McCarthy is only the most spectacular and extreme representative of a way of thinking that in some form or other has gripped the greater part of the American citizenry. His political collapse did not end the agitation for setting practical limitations on free speculation: it simply institutionalized it and made it respectable. The recent improvement in the civic atmosphere has concealed the permanent fashion in which that atmosphere has changed during the past decade. We are living at a higher level of freedom than in 1953—but this level is far below that to which we were accustomed before 1945. We have learned to take for granted official and semi-official procedures —a whole ramifying network of "clearances," denunciations, and nearly invisible taboos— that are novelties in the American Constitutional tradition. In fact, questions of personal freedom have largely passed outside the sphere of partisan debate. In the current campaign the two parties are virtually in agreement that the present combination of allowing the more notorious administrative innovations to lapse, and regularizing those that remain, is just about what the country requires.

The experience of the years 1952 to 1954 tended to make the Democratic party ap-

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pear as more pro-intellectual than it actually was. In their fear of McCarthy and adulation of Stevenson, people forgot that President Truman had not been particularly hospitable to intellectual talent and that it was he rather than the Republicans who in 1950 had inaugurated the more sweeping type of security procedures. Today the Democratic incumbents of certain Congressional committee chairmanships are not at all reassuring from an intellectual standpoint. It should be obvious that a Democratic victory —whatever may be the personal preferences of Mr. Stevenson—would not result in a dramatic revision of security measures or a wholesale return of academic talent to the capital.

In short, the situation may be settling down to what can be considered as "normal" for the postwar period. Under these circumstances, it is incumbent on American writers and scholars to rethink their relationship to their fellow citizens and to the state—that whole "public" aspect of their endeavors that has never been absent from the Western intellectual tradition.

IN THIS re-evaluation, the American intellectuals should first of all consider the question of their own threatened obsolescence. In a highly developed industrial society like ours, to pose the problem of whether the freely speculating mind has lost its function is more than mere paradox-mongering. Certainly the range of such speculation has been drastically reduced: what part public pressure has played in this process, and what part is due to a failure of mental initiative, is by no means clear. In any case, it is apparent that a vast number of questions that used to be hotly debated have now passed outside the sphere of relevant controversy. We are living in a society and in an era where there is scope for comparatively few intellectuals. Supply is outrunning demand: the colleges and graduate schools are turning out in ever increasing numbers individuals who at least fancy themselves to be dedicated to free speculation. But there is really not enough for all of them to do. Why should people write more and more when the public seems to be reading less and less?

Eventually, of course, the job market will take care of the matter. Already—as opposed to two or three years back—there are positions available for all the Ph.D.'s that the universities are currently producing or are likely to produce. Within a decade there will be a real shortage of intellectually trained personnel. But these present and future vacancies will not be for *intellectuals*: they will be for "mental technicians"—experts for the business world, civil servants, and, above all, pedagogues to teach routine courses. Such jobs will not be what their incumbents originally aimed at—but the genuinely intellectual outlets will be no more numerous than before.

For the possible comfort of these future intellectuals *manqués*, one may suggest that they will at least be filling an urgent national need. The true writers and scholars, on the contrary, may be assailed by ever greater doubts as to the usefulness of their traditional pursuits. Moreover, the financial rewards will probably more than ever go to the mental technicians rather than to the intellectuals (except for a selected few of the latter, who will rank as bizarre adornments on a monotonous landscape). Eventually even the intangible factors of leisure and prestige may begin to favor the mental technician over the creative writer or scholar: already the latter, despite his nominal nine-month year of employment, usually works harder than his opposite number in the service of government or industry. It is more than likely that the intellectual life will become an increasingly lonely and misunderstood affair. Those who embark on it should have clearly in mind the rigorous sort of personal commitment that it will entail.

From what I have said earlier it should be apparent that I believe they will have to make a sharp choice between intellectual independence and government service. This is a facet of the case of Robert Oppenheimer that has not been adequately noticed. So far as I can tell, the essence of the charge against

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Professor Oppenheimer was that he had set his personal judgment of public morality and human relations against what had gradually become official policy. Certainly his stand was justifiable and indeed noble from the standpoint of the private ethics of an intellectual. But was it equally valid in his capacity as a public servant? I confess that for me this is the doubtful part of the Oppenheimer case and of other similar "security" questions. And I suggest that the only way to resolve the insoluble conflict between the ethic of the free intellectual and the ethic of the public servant is a withdrawal from one function or the other. Would it not have been better in the case of Professor Oppenheimer and his like simply to have submitted a dignified resignation?

IN THIS era, in which, at the risk of perilous misunderstanding, one must dot the i's and cross the t's of one's argument, I suppose I should add that all the foregoing in no way derogates from the duty of the government to defend itself from spies and saboteurs, and the corresponding duty of the citizen—*including* the intellectual—to offer with scrupulous correctness the evidences of exclusive loyalty that the national state requires of him. Indeed, rather more than the rest of his countrymen, the intellectual should be meticulous about performing his civic duties. It is only by so doing that he can win the general confidence that will enable him to continue what may look like increasingly peculiar activities.

If, then, the intellectual of the future will be obliged to opt decisively against service to government or business—except for purely temporary arrangements which will be of an episodic or crisis character—this does not mean that he will have to go it alone. The sense of solidarity that the American intellectuals acquired during the tumults of a few years back has by no means disappeared. The beginnings of corporative organization that have reinforced the position of writers and scholars will doubtless be further developed. And this is quite as it should be. In an era in which labor, business, and other groups of citizens bound together by common interests are accustomed to exert pressure on government and the public through some sort of corporative organization, the intellectuals are gradually coming to realize that they also need to be similarly equipped. Such groupings as the American Association of University Professors, the Civil Liberties Union, and the numerous *ad hoc* pools of financial resources that have seen threatened individuals through a series of victorious court battles have proved their permanent worth.

But the newly found corporate solidarity among American intellectuals will prove of no avail unless the group in question is narrowly and rigorously delimited. An indiscriminate welcoming of mere hangers-on will do no good and may greatly harm the cause of liberal inquiry. For at a time when the whole notion of the freely speculating mind has been called into question and will almost certainly continue to be subject to periodic attack, the intellectuals will be able to defend themselves only if they convince their fellow citizens of the responsibility and seriousness of their calling. Dilettantism will not help—nor will the production of bright ideas for essentially practical purposes masking as intellectual activity. Those undertaking a career as a writer or scholar would do well to put themselves some searching questions as to whether they are psychologically equipped to face these conditions.

I do not believe, then, that the intellectual—and more particularly the American intellectual—is obsolete. But I do believe that he faces a dubious future. He will confront a public only sporadically (and then often dangerously) interested in what he does. He will be obliged to withstand the almost irresistible pressures urging him in subtle fashion toward conformity to the role of a mental technician. Robbed of *both* of his historic functions—as the ideological bulwark of society and as its utopian critic—he may himself begin to doubt the relevance of his pursuits. His path will be a very special one: it will not be for the half-hearted.

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SUEZ AND THE WESTERN POWERS

Where Will Nasser Stop?

GEORGE LICHTHEIM

WHEN an international crisis bursts upon the world, one of the things it does is to set earlier events in better perspective. Since July this has been true of the East-West struggle for control of Egypt and the Suez Canal. In the light of the long-term issues raised by this conflict, Colonel Nasser's rash defiance of the maritime nations takes on the appearance of a dramatic coup designed to give Egypt the maximum leverage in a situation where East and West alike are bidding for the support of Arab nationalism. Events had been shaping in this way for some time, and we ought not to have been surprised, but it is a rule of experience that the immediate past only begins to be properly understood when a new plateau has been reached whence it can be viewed afresh.

It was thus with Hitler's and Mussolini's exploits during the 30's, when what at first looked like isolated actions gradually began to form a pattern. In retrospect, it seems astonishing how long it took the world to draw the obvious conclusion, but at the time nothing seemed less likely than that two medium-sized European countries would plunge the whole globe into war. They could not of course have done so had they not been able to exploit underlying trends making for international anarchy. It does no harm to bear this comparison in mind, and not only for the sake of the obvious and, by now, somewhat hackneyed argument that the Western powers ought not to repeat the mistakes they made twenty years ago. There can in any case be no exact repetition of that earlier experience, if only because, even in relation to the rest of the Middle East, Egypt does not occupy the commanding position held by Germany in Central Europe during the 30's. The reason why it is nonetheless useful to evoke the parallel is that we have no other yardstick for measuring the reactions of the powers to the Suez crisis. It has been remarked by puzzled observers that of these powers, Russia seems to be the only one that is not afraid of Egypt. But even the Russians must move warily if they are to keep the support of Arab nationalism.

From the viewpoint of the Arab nationalists, this conflict gives the Middle Eastern countries, grouped around Egypt, exactly the kind of central position that Germany for a while was able to exploit. Tactically, Nasser is doing what Hitler did before him, and this (rather than the somewhat far-fetched comparisons with the much more potent Axis threat that have suddenly become the fashion in diplomatic quarters and among British and French writers) is the justification for treating his challenge as a sequel to the European upheaval twenty years ago. It can indeed be demonstrated that the Nasser regime is not fully fascist—if only because Egypt is too backward for a genuinely modern totalitarianism to take root; what cannot be so easily dismissed is the likelihood that the regime will pursue a course calculated to plunge the Middle East into war.

The probability of such an outcome has now at last been realized by the British government, which for years had tried to appease the Egyptian dictator in the hope of

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GEORGE LICHTHEIM continues his running interpretation of events in the Middle East storm center with an analysis of the current Suez crisis. Mr. Lichtheim, who is one of COMMENTARY'S steadiest contributors from abroad, should need no introduction. His last previous appearance in these pages was in August, with the article "Politics Among the Arabs."

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confining his ambition to less dangerous projects. Illumination has, however, come under particularly unfavorable circumstances, with France handicapped by the Algerian struggle and the United States plainly inclined to prolong Nasser's stay in power, at the cost to the Egyptian dictator of some not very far-reaching concessions in the domain of international management (or merely supervision) of the Suez Canal. In consequence, there is a danger that Nasser will not merely get away with it, but secure the kind of spectacular triumph that will embolden him to push his campaign a stage further. As the London *Times* correctly observed, "Nasser is poisoning the relations of the West with the Arab world." It might have added that he has successfully done so for years, not least because his outrageous pretense of having to defend the Arab world against Israel was indirectly sanctioned by constant Western babble about the need to "settle" this supposedly all-important obstacle to "better relations."

IT IS only now, with the facts staring them in the face, that the British government and its supporters have abandoned this nonsense and allowed their true fears to become vocal. In the process they have, however, failed to rally the British public—let alone the Commonwealth—behind them. The switch has been too abrupt, and the brief period of Conservative saber-rattling at the beginning of August (which failed to frighten the Egyptians) thus had a thoroughly unnerving effect on Liberal and Labor circles, to say nothing of public opinion in India, Ceylon, and the uncommitted countries of the Middle East. It is indeed one of the major ironies of the situation that Nasser, having seized the assets of the Suez Canal Company by force and taken illegal possession of an international waterway, has been able to pose as the victim of Anglo-French bellicosity, while the British government has had to apologize to the world, including its own public at home, for daring to take some precautionary military measures.

At the time of writing, no one can say whether and how the Egyptian government will finally be enabled to extend its physical possession of the Suez Canal to effective control of its management, coupled with some financial arrangement giving it the lion's share of all future income from shipping dues. Such an arrangement appeared probable to most observers from the moment it became clear that Britain and France lacked the nerve to impose an alternative solution. With the United States and the USSR looming behind the immediate contestants in the role of watchful guardians of their allies' interests, the role of unofficial mediator was bound to fall to India, which in the circumstances could only mean that Egypt would obtain just enough Asian backing to nullify any serious threat of intervention. In effect, therefore, the conference held in London at the end of August had to settle one point only: the size of the economic bribe that would induce Nasser to consent to some kind of international supervision. The discrepancy between this outcome and the inordinate hopes, fears, and expectations aroused by the Eden government's brief display of energy in late July and early August has been sufficiently pronounced to drive a good many people—not only Conservatives—to something near despair. But it is the kind of outcome that cooler heads had predicted from the start. Given the state of Asian opinion, which invests any military action against Egypt with the heaviest political risks, it was inevitable that Britain and France should back down—so far as military intervention was concerned. Economic sanctions are another matter.

This, however, is not to say that by backing down they have saved the essentials of the Western position in the Middle East and aligned themselves once more with the main current of public opinion in Asia and Africa. What Britain and France—but above all Britain, which originally took the lead in the drive against Nasser—have done is to react in a manner likely to obtain for him just the degree of African nationalist support that he needs.

It is Egypt which has so far won the

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war of nerves; and the Egypt we have to deal with is ruled by a dictator who has made it plain what his further aims are. The London *Times* (August 15), which usually tends to wrap political issues in legal cotton-wool, for once refrained from calling a spade an agricultural implement:

> Britain and the West, in taking a stand on the canal issue, have taken a risk. If the situation is mishandled, Arab nationalism may sweep through the oilfields of the Middle East and for some time deprive us of our sources of supply. But the risk, had we stood by idle, would have been greater and might well have become a certainty. The memory of Abadan, the Lebanon's threat to the I.P.C. pipeline, the repudiation of the Indonesian debt, Dr. Azikiwe's remarks on English banking in eastern Nigeria—all these are warnings that the consequences of Nasser's action going unchallenged would be the progressive elimination of European stakes, and European contribution to development, in the emergent countries. . . .
>
> Simple, legitimate interests, and the rule of law, are at stake. They have to be asserted. There is an immense tide of emotional nationalism now in flood. It should be respected, but not feared. The emergent peoples are not fools. . . . They are capable of recognizing when others act of necessity. . . .

This is well enough in its way, but the "tough" line cannot be followed while the U.S. and the USSR cancel each other out, thereby allowing Asian and Arab nationalism to overrun all the old political landmarks. It is this world stalemate that has enabled the Egyptian dictator to blackmail the Western nations. It is the same stalemate that will make it possible for him, with the Suez Canal revenues in his pocket, to turn his attention to Iraq, the only remaining "stable" Arab country and the chief pillar of the Baghdad Pact. One must indeed be blind not to see that the pact is next on his list of victims—there are enough nationalist conspirators in Baghdad to launch the necessary cascade of army coups and assassinations, though whether in the end a country which borders on Turkey can hope to keep the Mosul oil fields if it falls into anarchy is another question. However that may be, this particular avalanche is now well and truly under way, and the only question is whether it can be checked before war has been added to the long list of calamities from which the Middle East is suffering.

II

So far as British opinion is concerned—and it should be borne in mind that from the start the British government has been the pace-setter of Western reaction to Nasser's coup—there are two, and only two, coherent attitudes visible: a conviction that Nasser is the West's enemy number one, who must be overthrown at all costs; and an equally stubborn belief that since he cannot be overthrown without a disastrous struggle, he must be appeased at all costs. It now looks as though these diverging lines of thought correspond to the division between government and opposition, or between Conservative and Liberal-Labor opinion. In reality the issue cuts across party lines, for there are many Conservatives who hesitate to go all the way with the advocates of firmness, just as there are some Liberals and Socialists who do not share the pacifist sentimentality of the left. More important, government and opposition are at bottom united both in dislike of Nasser and in unwillingness to use force, except under extreme provocation, e.g. closure of the Canal to ships belonging to the "Users' Association." And even on this point there is now (in mid-September) considerable uncertainty.

What the current split in British public opinion really amounts to is a profound divergence on the future prospects of Western policy and enterprise in the Middle East. If one believes (as do most Labor supporters and the Liberal public represented by journals like the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Observer*, not to mention the *New Statesman and Nation*, whose reaction was predictable) that the West stands to lose everything unless it swims with the nationalist tide, it is quite a plausible argument that we had better prepare ourselves for the forthcoming nationalization (i.e. expropriation) of all Western oil holdings in the Middle East, to be followed by some kind of bargain

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with the new owners. In the eyes of those holding this view, loyalty to international law precludes all thought of sanctions against Egypt; this is the common bond holding together the rather motley opposition to the British government's half-hearted talk of using force. It is an opposition which can count on a confused mass of leftwing public opinion, traditionally suspicious of what it regards as Tory bellicosity, though recently rather angry with Egypt and not averse to having Nasser "taught a lesson." But its hard core is made up of the characteristically liberal synthesis of legalism and internationalism: nothing is to be done save through the United Nations, and if the United Nations is paralyzed by the veto and the Arab-Asian bloc, this merely goes to show that it is folly to talk of acting against the solid mass of Eastern opinion. In any case, military action is ruled out as being likely to set the Arab world on fire.

It is a perfectly consistent, dignified, and civilized reaction to what has happened, and one's only marvel is that those who take this line are so sure not merely of their virtue but of their superior ability to measure the future. The fact is that each party to this debate, as so often happens, has got hold of one end of the stick and refuses to let go. If it is true that the original Anglo-French reaction was futile (especially since it culminated in an invitation to a conference, instead of a prompt military ultimatum and action following within forty-eight hours), it is no less true that the now fashionable Liberal-Socialist prescription will merely whet Nasser's growing appetite. To say this, however, is not necessarily to differ from those who hold that the use of force against Egypt would be madness under present circumstances. It is merely to point out that the Western powers are in a dilemma and cannot afford to indulge in illusions about their ability to control the march of events in the Middle East. Their position has been fatally undermined by Egypt's virulence and by irresponsible Arab nationalism. It is mere common sense to recognize this and to get ready for worse shocks.

HERE, unfortunately, one is compelled to part company with the proponents of "reasonableness." It is their smugness that is so alarming. The former Labor M.P. who wrote to the *Times:* ". . . we know that the United Nations will be no more effective than was the League of Nations. We shall deserve the catastrophe we shall certainly incur if we do not shoulder our proper responsibilities," caused alarm and anger on the left. Fancy talking like that, when all right-thinking people ought to know that (to quote another letter-writer, this time an eminent Liberal) the Charter ". . . means that military force must not be used on the territory of a foreign power, except in defense against armed aggression (which has not taken place) or at the behest of the Security Council." For some reason the people who take this line invariably overlook the fact that Egypt has for years proclaimed herself at war with Israel, and thereby laid herself open to being disciplined by the Security Council—except, of course, that the Security Council has no such intention (or power, in view of the veto).

It is the old story of pacifism masquerading as sturdy defense of international law. The blank horror on the left when Gaitskell, in his first unpremeditated reaction to the Suez coup, spoke of a struggle for control of the Middle East, was instructive to watch: such language from the leader of the opposition! Truly, democracy and a rational foreign policy do not go easily together.

By now, of course, this particular issue is dead. Mr. Gaitskell has heard from the party managers and obediently come round to the orthodox Labor position, according to which the chief threat to world peace is Tory bellicosity. This kind of thing makes fine election stuff, but does not help one to understand what is going on in the world. The internationalist argument is a little more respectable, though weakened by failure to take account of power politics in the Asian world: one would never guess from the *New Statesman's* tributes to Mr. Nehru and Mr. Krishna Menon that India's attitude has throughout been determined by her own

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tactical considerations, e.g. hostility to Pakistan and unwillingness to let Russia pose as the sole champion of anti-colonialism.

Lastly, there are the "realists" who assert that Britain and France blundered badly during the first fortnight of the conflict, and were saved from the consequences of their own folly by the discovery that Asian opinion was against them. This is true, but it is the kind of negative judgment that does not tell one much about the proper attitude to be pursued on the next occasion. The fact is that London and Paris were panicked by the discovery that their assets in the Middle East could be confiscated with impunity, while Russia and America stood watching each other and canceling each other out. Behind this débâcle there loomed the even more alarming prospect of another Yalta, i.e., a tacit Soviet-American agreement to partition North Africa and the Middle East, at the expense of the "old colonial powers." It was to lay this ghost that Mr. Dulles appeared in person at the London conference. For the moment the ghost has ceased to clank its chains in Whitehall, though the French have apparently not yet buried their belief that the whole Suez operation was mounted with the tacit assistance of U.S. Ambassador Henry Byroade, and that the final upshot will be an American-Egyptian consortium to run the Canal and divert the profits to Egypt (see *Le Monde* for August 25). These doubtless unworthy suspicions are only mentioned here to indicate how little the Western nations trust each other, and how far they have to go if they wish to present a united front to the Moscow-Cairo axis.

PERHAPS the only consolation to be derived from the Western diplomacy of the past few months is that it has at least broken up the Bandung camp: instead of standing closer together as a result of the recent upheaval, Russia and India have visibly pulled apart, while on her other flank India has momentarily lost touch with Pakistan, Turkey, and Persia—in short, with the predominantly Moslem countries which are not Arab and have no illusions about Colonel Nasser. This at any rate is something; in the context of Asian and Middle Eastern politics it is quite a substantial achievement, and even in terms of global alignments it is not to be sneezed at. But it does not quite compensate for the impending loss of Western control over Suez, the further undermining of Western influence in the Arab world, and the USSR's growing prestige among the more bellicose and fanatical Arab chauvinists. Mr. Shepilov may not have emerged with brilliant honors from the London conference—seen at close quarters he seems a fairly typical specimen of the Khrushchev era of pompous mediocrity—but though towards the end he had maneuvered himself into something approaching isolation among his colleagues, he managed to retain his hold over the Egyptians. Making Colonel Nasser relinquish the Russian bear's precious support is going to be a difficult operation and, even if successful, may turn out to cost more money than the U.S. originally offered to finance the Aswan dam. The attempt would nonetheless be worth making if Nasser had not already shown himself in his true colors.

It will of course be made anyhow, whatever the reluctance of London and Paris to sanction Mr. Dulles's diplomacy. Britain and France are not in control of the situation; from the outset of the crisis they never were. Their only hope now is that both the United States and the Asian world will become disillusioned with Colonel Nasser before he sets fire to what remains of their earthly possessions. It is a slim hope. The chances are that Nasser will continue to march towards the goal of reviving the "Arab empire" of his schoolboy imagination, with Turkey, Persia, Ethiopia, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia gradually cooling towards him, but not quite fast enough to give him pause. In the interval there is scope enough for the partial fulfilment of his military dreams. Should he come a cropper over Israel or some other obstacle, there are of course rival aspirants for power, able and willing to continue where he left off. At worst, as Mr. Khrushchev pointed out to the

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British and French ambassadors in Moscow last August, the Arab states, if checked in warfare, can count on Soviet "volunteers" to bail them out. It is not a pretty prospect.

III

NOTHING has so far been said of the ostensible target of Colonel Nasser's Canal seizure: the revenues of the Suez Company. This is not because the matter is unimportant, but because it is tangential to the real issue, which is political control of the world's most important waterway (physical control of course is indisputably Egyptian—what is at stake is the character of the regime to whom it is proposed to entrust the Canal administration, not the question whose soldiers are to line the Nile banks). Given the likelihood that in the end a compromise will enable Egypt to buy the Company off and pocket a larger share of the Canal revenues, it becomes the more important to take the operational control out of the hands of an aggressive, self-centered dictatorship.

In principle this could be done by internationalizing the Canal completely, i.e. by instituting an extra-territorial regime over a strip of land running along its banks and placing the whole administration under joint international control. This is the solution which Egypt fears most, which Russia and India (for different reasons) are determined to block, and which the West ought to demand, since it is the only real guarantee against interference with shipping. The Western powers, of course, have no intention of pressing for such a solution—or to be exact, the United States has no such intention—and in consequence Britain and France can do nothing about it, though they would like to impose some such scheme on Egypt if Nasser can be forced out.

It is likewise evident that on this issue Egypt can count on more or less reluctant support from those Moslem nations which have given their shaky allegiance to the Dulles formula. Whatever their qualms about Nasser, they are not yet ready to subscribe to the thesis that Egypt is incompetent to manage the Canal, and most of them have politely ignored Sir Anthony Eden's plaintive evocation of the fascist specter. Experience may gradually convert them to tacit acceptance of the view that Suez is too important to the world, including Asia, to be made the plaything of Egyptian chauvinists, but the moment to press this claim has not yet come. When it arrives, it will be interesting to see whether U.S. concern over Panama will interfere with an opportunity to assert the interests of the world community.

In the meantime there is little to be gained from measuring the immediate risks of a stoppage of oil to Europe against the probability that Egyptian administrators and technicians will in the end prove as incompetent as Dr. Mossadegh's helpers did in Persia five years ago. The case against an Anglo-French policy of tough economic sanctions is not that it will encourage the Egyptian dictatorship to throttle the Canal, but that in the end it will prove self-defeating. Egypt can probably operate the Canal, however inefficiently, without the Western pilots who have been withdrawn. Other Western pilots, as well as contingents of Russian, Polish, and Yugoslav pilots, are now there for training. If Britain and France turn on the pressure, while the U.S. stands aside and the smaller maritime nations refuse to align themselves with a policy of sanctions, the most likely outcome is another diplomatic fiasco. For this reason the most clear-headed observers have come to advocate a policy of firmness which falls just short of giving Egypt an excuse for applying counter-measures against Anglo-French shipping. Such a policy involves a certain minimum degree of economic pressure until Colonel Nasser has signified his readiness to discuss the Dulles formula for international control, as against the Indian-Russian proposal to offer Egypt a new treaty giving other countries merely the right to "advise" on management problems.

This is clearly the line which Britain and France have decided to follow, and for which they are trying to secure American support on the one hand, and Asian acquiescence on the other. It is relatively promising, since, after all, the potential members of

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the "Users' Association" represent the overwhelming bulk of the shipping that passes through the Canal. If this majority holds together (already it shows signs of strain), it might in the end compel Egypt to accept an arrangement giving non-Egyptian interests effective control of the future Canal management board. Yet even in this case the major problem will remain unsolved as long as the present regime continues in power, for no international board can hope to maintain physical control of the Canal so as to insure free and non-discriminatory access to all the world's shipping.

If one rules out as impractical the elimination of Egyptian sovereignty from the strip of land through which the Canal runs, one is left with the conclusion that the Egyptian authorities on the spot must be placed in a frame of mind suitable to their responsibilities. They must, in other words, stop being chauvinists and learn to treat the Canal not as Egypt's plaything but as a genuinely international waterway from which Egypt may reasonably try to extract financial profit, but which must be lifted clean out of the area of power politics and made available to the ships of all nations, no matter what flag they fly, and whether or not their governments are on good terms with Egypt or the other Arab countries.

THIS is the essence of the Dulles formula. That such an attitude will in fact be displayed by the present Egyptian regime, or by any successor likely to emerge in the near future, is so improbable that one must marvel at the optimism of those who maintain that the London conference has laid the groundwork for an acceptable compromise. It is in fact far more likely that in the end Cairo will commit itself to nothing more than a form of international supervision leaving effective control in Egyptian hands, and that this control will operate so as to give Colonel Nasser the permanent blackmailing power which he requires for his wider plans. Such an outcome can easily be concealed by a formula that looks reasonably good on paper, at least to people who are willing to trust Colonel Nasser's intentions. To others it will signify a decorously veiled triumph for Egyptian chauvinism.

On paper, the Egyptian bargaining position does not look very strong. Some 95 per cent of the shipping passing through the Canal belongs to the seventeen nations who support the amended Dulles formula. Egypt herself and the four dissident powers —Russia, India, Indonesia, and Ceylon—own between them only one and a half per cent of the total tonnage. The demand for international control has therefore the practically unanimous support of the Canal's users. Moreover, since the imposition of a partial Anglo-French financial blockade, less than half of the Canal dues are being paid to the new Egyptian authority. Colonel Nasser must therefore negotiate, in some form or other, if he is to obtain more of the Canal revenues; his only alternative is to close the Canal to ships which do not pay dues to his own authority. This would be in clear contravention of international law, and would in fact constitute the sort of action that Anglo-French military measures have been designed to discourage.

It is of course an open question whether —if matters ever came to the point—Britain and France would live up to their public utterances. Many Egyptians evidently think they will not, and Mr. Shepilov has already warned them of the wrath to come if they do. By the time these words appear in print, we may be in a better position to judge whether Anglo-French nerves have been toughened by the experience of the 30's. The best guess at the moment would seem to be that while mental awareness has been sharpened by the lessons of the Hitler-Mussolini period, there has been no corresponding improvement of moral fiber. Certainly the disregard of Israel's rights for the past seven years, until it became convenient to revive the issue, argues no great advance beyond the political standards of the Chamberlain epoch.

Assuming, however, that the Western alliance proves both tougher and more resolute than we have a right to expect, the question

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arises what the European nations are to do in the interval until the whole of Asia, from Turkey to Japan, comes round to the reluctant conclusion that Colonel Nasser cannot be trusted to run the Canal. The Egyptian economy is not indeed in a position to stand great strains; if the Western nations boycotted the Canal for a while, the inconvenience they would thereby impose on themselves (mainly in the form of bigger European dollar purchases in Western hemisphere oil markets) would be small compared to the effect such action would have on Egypt. Colonel Nasser would then have to decide whether to go the whole hog and become a Soviet satellite pure and simple. It is possible that he may shrink from this unattractive fate and take refuge in Indian mediation and a compromise formula; it is of course likewise conceivable that he may drag Egypt over the brink. Such a test of nerves, however disagreeable, may in the end seem preferable (even in the eyes of Western diplomats) to a policy of giving him what he wants.

A COMPROMISE over the running of the Canal would not, however, eliminate the need to reduce Europe's dependence on Middle Eastern oil, and especially on its transport through the Suez Canal. The current crisis has thrown this dependence into urgent relief and thereby probably hastened the adoption of long-term measures designed to spread the political risks. These are now concentrated in the two major transit countries—Egypt with its Canal, and Syria with its pipelines. To build another pipeline through Syria, in order to reduce Europe's dependence on the Canal, would be an act of folly. To make use of Israel as a transit country would probably sharpen Arab political antagonism, and although it would do the Western powers no harm to show a little backbone in their conduct toward the Arabs, it must be recognized that they cannot thereby solve the major transport problem. The best plan probably is to build enough super-tankers to be able to carry the bulk of the oil from the Persian Gulf to Europe round the Cape of Good Hope. Since Iran and Kuwait—the two relatively stable areas—produce about half the total supply of Middle Eastern oil, this would have the additional advantage of integrating production and transport more closely with political planning. In the long run this seems the most likely outcome of the present challenge to European reliance on the Suez Canal. It is in fact not impossible that by gambling for such high stakes Colonel Nasser will in the end turn out to have given both the maritime nations and the European oil consumers the necessary incentive for making themselves independent of the permanent blackmail he clearly hopes to levy on them.

Such an outcome would also provide a relatively satisfactory answer to those who criticize the British government's unconditional withdrawal from the Suez Zone in 1954. This decision was in fact a gamble which is now seen to have disappointed its promoters. It formed part of a deliberate attempt to secure the friendship of Colonel Nasser, then still operating under General Naguib's presidency. More generally, it was a continuation of Britain's post-1914 policy of working with the current of Arab nationalism. The failure of this policy is now admitted by all save a handful of ideologists and Arabophile specialists with a stake in desert mirages; in particular, it is tacitly acknowledged by the oil interests and the industries that depend on them. One can now read in the London *Financial Times* an admission that political uncertainties generated by excessive dependence on Suez "were one of the reasons why the transfer to [oil-burning] diesels on British railways was delayed ten years longer than it should have been." In the end, no amount of vested ideological interest in Arabophile fantasies can stand up to the silent pressure of such considerations. Western Europe needs secure access to the Middle Eastern oil reserves, although in a crisis they could be dispensed with long enough to bring any Arab government tumbling down. To gain the necessary conditions for long-range economic planning, the British and European governments will, finally,

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be driven to reduce both their political investment in Arab good will and their technical dependence on the Suez bottleneck. Both processes have probably been set in train already by Egypt's dictator, though the results may be somewhat slow in coming. If this forecast proves accurate, Colonel Nasser will go down as the man who forced the Western nations to make themselves less dependent on Arab potentates.

SINCE the predictable failure of the Menzies mission to Cairo, these long-range issues have begun to look a good deal less academic. It is obvious now that if the Western powers want to bring Colonel Nasser to his senses (or to eliminate him by slow strangulation, as was done in the case of Dr. Mossadegh), their only recourse is to economic sanctions—leaving aside the doubtful utility of the appeal to the Security Council, which in any case can only produce some extra moral-political pressure, and may in the end produce nothing at all. Such sanctions (for which Washington appears to show less enthusiasm than London and Paris) must involve at least three distinct steps: the partial or total re-routing of Western shipping round the Cape, in order to deny Colonel Nasser the revenue he wants; acceptance of American aid to help Western Europe finance dollar purchases of oil in the Western hemisphere, which would replace some of the regular flow from the Middle East while the reorganization of transport is in progress; and American cooperation in building, as rapidly as possible, a fleet of long-distance oil tankers capable of taking oil round the Cape at an economic cost.

How far the U. S. administration can be expected to go along with such policies is now a matter for some speculation. On the one hand, most American officials seem a good deal less "hard" on the subject of Colonel Nasser than the British and French, who have had more direct experience of his methods. On the other, election-year nervousness over the possibility that Britain and France may take the military bit between their teeth should induce the Americans to support economic sanctions. It is recalled in London that in the Persian case Washington came round to the European view that Mossadegh was not a reliable partner. The difference of course is that he had no organized mass movement behind him. But the fact that Nasser is more dangerous merely makes it more urgent, in the Anglo-French view, to get rid of him.

The alternative to such a policy is to angle for Indian or Pakistani "mediation" to produce a compromise acceptable to Egypt. What this would in fact imply has already been made clear by Colonel Nasser: he is prepared to accept his own maximum terms, if they are served up to him by India or Pakistan in the guise of a formula dressed up to look like a compromise between his original demands and the London conference plan. This kind of thing may have an appeal to politicians, in and out of office, whose chief concern is to avoid trouble. It has no meaning in the real context of the Suez dispute. Ultimately, whatever the Bandung powers may be able to do for Egypt at the United Nations, they will have to face the fact that the Western nations are unwilling to entrust their economic safety to the Egyptian dictator. If the Bandung powers insist on backing him to the end, they will hasten his economic isolation from European countries. In other words, they will help make the Suez Canal worthless.

This outcome is clearly foreshadowed by the differing European and Asian reactions to the failure of the Menzies mission. Regrettable though this is, it is preferable to war on the one hand, and capitulation on the other. Either would be a disaster. An economic boycott which persuades the Egyptians that even a nationalist regime cannot with impunity trample on the rights of other nations, seems the best cure for the present state of mind. A strategy of this kind demands good nerves and a relative absence of sentimentality, whether of the Tory-imperialist or the Liberal-pacifist kind. At the time of writing some of the political preconditions of such an attitude may be beginning to emerge.

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NOTES ON GENTILE PRO-SEMITISM

New England's "Good Jews"

EDMUND WILSON

THE Gentile of American Puritan stock who puts himself in contact with the Hebrew culture finds something at once so alien that he has to make a special effort in order to adjust himself to it, and something that is perfectly familiar. The Puritanism of New England was a kind of new Judaism, a Judaism transposed into Anglo-Saxon terms. These Protestants, in returning to the text of the Bible, had concentrated on the Old Testament, and some had tried to take it as literally as any Orthodox Jew. The Judaic observances in New England were reduced to honoring the Sabbath on Sunday, but the attendance in the house of worship and the cessation from work on this day approached in their rigor the Jewish practice; and in England "certain extremists," says Dr. Cecil Roth, in his *History of the Jews in England,* had "regarded the 'old' dispensation as binding, and even reverted to its practices of circumcision and the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath. In 1600, the Bishop of Exeter complained of the prevalence of 'Jewism' in his diocese, and such views were comparatively common in London and the Eastern counties. Numerous persons were prosecuted here for holding what were termed 'Judaistic' opinions, based on the literal interpretations of the Old Testament. As late as 1612, two so-called Arians died at the stake (the last persons to suffer capital punishment in England purely for their religion) for teaching views regarding the nature of God which approximated to those of Judaism. The followers of the Puritan extremist, John Traske, went so far on the path of literalism that they were imprisoned in 1618-20 on a charge of Judaizing. In this case, the accusation was so far from being exaggerated that a number of them settled in Amsterdam and formally joined the synagogue."

When the Puritans came to America, they identified George III with Pharaoh and themselves with the Israelites in search of the Promised Land. They called their new country Canaan and talked continually of the covenant they had made with God. Winthrop and Bradford were Moses and Joshua; Anne Hutchinson was pilloried as Jezebel. "The Christian church so-called," said a preacher in New Marlborough, Massachusetts, "is only a continuation and extension of the Jewish church." "If we keep this covenant," said Winthrop, "we shall finde then the God of Israel is among us." Hebrew, later on in New England, was to become a major subject not merely in the colleges but even in the schools.

All this, of course, is well enough known. There is an interesting chapter on the subject—to which I am indebted for the facts above—in a volume by various hands called *The Hebrew Impact on Western Civilization: Hebraic Foundations of American Democracy,* edited by Abraham I. Katsh. Yet we tend to forget how close our original relationship was to the Old Testament Jewish tradition. Our conception itself of America as a country with a mission in the world comes down to us from our Mosaic ancestors. We are told by Harriet Beecher Stowe that she had always felt in her child-

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IN THIS essay on philo-Semitism in America, EDMUND WILSON finds the feelings of Americans of Puritan stock peculiarly engaged by Jews and Judaism. Mr. Wilson, the first man of letters in this country, has just completed an autobiographical work, *A Piece of My Mind: Reflections at Sixty* (of which the present article forms a part), to be published later this month by Farrar, Straus and Cudahy.

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hood, after reading Cotton Mather's *Magnalia,* that "the very ground [New England] I stood on was consecrated by some special dealing of God's providence"; and, even in our time, Santayana, in *The Last Puritan,* has made one of his New England characters say: "We were always a circumcised people, consecrated to great expectations." The Gentile American, however, is no longer aware of this in his attitude toward Judaism, and the American Jew does not recognize in what is left of the Puritan tradition a Gentile imitation of Judaism. I have recently been collecting examples of the persistence through the 19th century of the New Englander's deep-rooted conviction that the Jews are a special people selected for a unique role by God, and that New England somehow shares this destiny.

PERHAPS the most curious of these is the rabbinical metamorphosis of the Hebrew scholar Calvin Ellis Stowe, the husband of Harriet Beecher. That Harriet was herself very close to the Pilgrim's self-identification with Israel is indicated not merely by the passage above but again and again elsewhere in her writings. She will, for example, open a chapter of *Poganuc People* with the statement that "Zeph Higgins was a good Jew." This does not mean that the pious Connecticut farmer was literally of Jewish blood, but simply that he tried to conform to the New England version of the Jewish code. "Zephaniah Pennel," she writes in *The Pearl of Orr's Island,* "was what might be called a Hebrew of the Hebrews. New England, in her earlier days, founding her institutions on the Hebrew Scriptures, bred better Jews than Moses could, because she read Moses with the amendments of Christ. The state of society in some of the districts of Maine, in these days, much resembled in its spirit that which Moses labored to produce in ruder ages. It was entirely democratic, simple, grave, hearty, and sincere—solemn and religious in its daily tone, and yet, as to all material good, full of wholesome thrift and prosperity." And again, in *Old Town Folks:* "I think that no New Englander, brought up under the regime established by the Puritans, could really estimate how much of himself had actually been formed by this constant face-to-face intimacy with Hebrew literature. . . . My grandfather (at family prayers) always prayed standing, and the image of his mild, silvery head, leaning over the top of the high-backed chair, always rises before me as I think of early days. There was no great warmth or fervor in those daily exercises, but rather a serious and decorous propriety. They were Hebraistic in their form; they spoke of Zion and Jerusalem, of the God of Israel, the God of Jacob, as much as if my grandfather had been a veritable Jew; and except for the closing phrase, 'for the sake of Thy Son, our Savior,' might well have been uttered in Palestine by a well-trained Jew in the time of David." Now, Calvin Stowe, in his Hebraic studies, went on from the Bible to the Talmud, and he prepared a pioneering study of this later holy book, in which Harriet attempted in vain to interest the *Atlantic Monthly.* He allowed his beard and his hair to grow and wore habitually a rabbinical skullcap, and, with his spectacles, he presents in his photographs an appearance that would have adorned any synagogue. He liked to pose with a New Testament—in some curious unbooklike form, perhaps masquerading as a Torah scroll—held up before him like Moses' Tablets. His wife was in the habit of referring to him as "my old rabbi" or simply "Old Rab." It may be that, in the case of Calvin Stowe, his Judaizing was a parallel development to that which eventually led Harriet to become an Episcopalian. Harriet had arrived by that time at a full and outspoken revolt against the Calvinist doctrines of Original Sin and salvation through Election; and it may be that Calvin, in a quieter way—he had to teach in Calvinist seminaries—was exemplifying a similar tendency. In Judaism, the Protestant of the Puritan tradition finds the spiritual austerity he already knows, but not bedeviled—the word is exact—by the fear of a despotic Deity who seems to favor or condemn by whim. The Jewish God may be retributory and terrible but he

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is not preoccupied with torment, not a perpetrator of nasty surprises as the Calvinist God was.

THE most extreme case, however, of an atavistic obsession with the Jews on the part of a well-educated New Englander is that of James Russell Lowell. His mania on this subject is mentioned, in a letter to Charles Eliot Norton, by his England friend Leslie Stephen. "He was so delighted," says Stephen, "with his ingenuity in discovering that everybody was in some way descended from the Jews because he had some Jewish feature, or a Jewish name, or a Gentile name such as the Jews were in the habit of assuming, or because he was connected with one of the departments of business or the geographical regions in which Jews are generally to be found, that it was scarcely possible to mention any distinguished man who could not be conclusively proved to be connected with the chosen race. The logic sometimes seemed to his hearers to have trifling defects; but that was all the greater proof of a sagacity which could dispense with strict methods of proof. To say the truth, this was the only subject upon which I could conceive Lowell approaching within measurable distance of boring." And an anonymous reporter, in the *Atlantic Monthly,* of "Conversations with Mr. Lowell"—quoted in the biography of Lowell by Horace Elisha Scudder—describes in detail such a disquisition. "At the mention of some medieval Jew," he says, "Lowell at once began to talk of the Jews, a subject which turned out to be almost a monomania with him. He detected a Jew in every hiding place and under every disguise, even when the fugitive had no suspicion of himself. To begin with nomenclature: all persons named for countries or towns are Jews; all with fantastic, compound names, such as Lilienthal, Morgenroth; all with names derived from colors, trades, animals, vegetables, minerals; all with Biblical names, except Puritan first names; all patronymics ending in *son, sohn, sen,* or any other versions; all Russels, originally so called from red-haired Israelites; all Walters, by long descended derivation from wolves and foxes in some ancient tongue; the Caecilii, therefore Cecilia Metella, no doubt St. Cecilia, too, consequently the Cecils, including Lord Burleigh and Lord Salisbury; he cited some old chronicle in which he had cornered one Robert de Caecilia and exposed him as an English Jew. He gave examples and instances of these various classes with amazing readiness and precision, but I will not pretend that I have set down even these few correctly. Of course there was Jewish blood in many royal houses and in most noble ones, notably in Spain. In short, it appeared that this insidious race had penetrated and permeated the human family more universally than any other influence except original sin. He spoke of their talent and versatility, and of the numbers who had been illustrious in literature, the learned professions, art, science, and even war, until by degrees, from being shut out of society and every honorable and desirable pursuit, they had gained the prominent positions everywhere.

"Then he began his classifications again: all bankers were Jews, likewise brokers, most of the great financiers—and that was to be expected; the majority of barons, also baronets; they had got possession of the press, they were getting into politics; they had forced their entrance into the army and navy; they had made their way into the cabinets of Europe and become prime ministers; they had slipped into diplomacy and become ambassadors. But a short time ago they were packed into the Ghetto: and now they inhabited palaces, the most aristocratic quarters, and were members of the most exclusive clubs. A few years ago they could not own land; they were acquiring it by purchase and mortgage in every part of Europe, and buying so many old estates in England that they owned the larger part of several counties.

". . . . Finally he came to a stop, but not to a conclusion, and as no one else spoke, I said, 'And when the Jews have got absolute control of finance, the army and navy, the press, diplomacy, society, titles,

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the government, and the earth's surface, what do you suppose they will do with them and with us?' 'That,' he answered, turning towards me, and in a whisper audible to the whole table, 'that is the question which will eventually drive me mad.'"

Though Lowell admired the Jews, he conceived them as a power so formidable that they seemed on the verge of becoming a menace. In this vision of a world run entirely by Jews there is something of morbid suspicion, something of the state of mind that leads people to believe in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," in a Jewish international conspiracy to dominate the civilized world.

But, before trying to get to the sources from which this delusion springs, let me give another example of New England Pan-Judaic doctrine. It might be thought that Barrett Wendell of Harvard was the perfect type of old-fashioned snob in regard to every kind of American not of strictly Anglo-Saxon origins, yet we find him—on October 18, 1891—writing to his father as follows: "I heard a queer theory the other day about the Yankee Puritans, whose religious views were so strongly Hebraic. They came chiefly, it seems, from Norfolk and Lincolnshire. These counties, some two or three centuries before the Reformation, had been the chief strongholds of the English Jews, who were finally expelled from the kingdom by one of the Plantagenet kings. At the time of the expulsion, many changed their faith and remained to be absorbed in the native population. It is wholly possible, then, that the Yankee Puritan, with all his Old Testament feeling, was really, without knowing it, largely Jewish in blood. There is in the Yankee nature much that would give color to the theory; but of course it is very far from being a proved fact. . . ." Is there any actual evidence for this or have we here simply a recrudescence of the Judaizing tendency of the Puritan?

I have noted that Lowell's prophecy of a universal Jewish dominance seems to skirt the state of mind of those who believe in the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion." It is possible to cite examples of a glorification of the Jews that has passed suddenly into a neurotic anti-Semitism. Such an example was the late John Jay Chapman. He was a mixture of New York and New England, but the New England strain in him was very strong. His grandmother had been a lieutenant of William Lloyd Garrison's, whom (Garrison) Chapman very much admired and about whom he wrote a book. Especially in this connection his relations with the Jews are significant. "There is a depth of human feeling in the Jew," he wrote in a memorandum of 1897, "that no other race ever possessed. We do no more than imitate it—and follow it. David, for instance, and his conduct about Uriah's wife and the child that died—and Absalom—and Jonathan. Compare the Greek—the Chinese, the Roman. These Jews are more human than any other men. It is the cause of the spread of their religion—for we are all adopted into Judah. The heart of the world is Jewish. There is the same spirit in the Old Testament as in the New. What monstrous perversion—that we should worship their God and despise themselves! We admire the Pyramids and the Egyptians, but the history of the Jews is the most remarkable, the most notable thing, on the globe. Their sacred books and chronicles and traditions and history make the annals of every other nation mere rubbish—and I feel this same power in the Jews I know. They are the most humane and the strongest people morally, mentally and physically. They persist. I'm glad I'm a Jew. I believe that's the reason why this paper-faced civilization impresses me so little. Take Habbakuk," etc., etc. (It was true that Chapman looked rather Jewish, and he wore an impressive beard in a period when beards had ceased to be fashionable; but neither Chapman himself in his memoirs nor his biographer, Mr. M. A. DeWolfe Howe, records that he had Jewish blood.)

This pro-Semitism was unquestionably to some extent due to Chapman's political dependence on a devoted Jewish friend, Mr. Isaac H. Klein of New York, who worked

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with him in his efforts at reform. "The Jews have in my experience," he writes in a letter dated from Wall Street, a little later in 1897, "more faith than the Christians. They have clever heads, better hearts and more belief in the power of good every way. They gave to the world all the religion it has got and are themselves the most religious people in it. I work with them day and night and most of the time is spent in prying up some Christian to do a half day's work."

But between the 1890's and the 1920's, Chapman's attitude toward the Jews underwent an astonishing change. One gets the impression from a letter, written from Atlantic City, of December, 1919, that his disillusion may have begun with the spectacle of crowds of vacationing Jews who did not strike him as being the equals of Habbakuk and Isaac Klein: "They are uncritical," he now writes. "Life is a simple matter to them: a bank account and the larder. No, they will never rule the world. They are too easily deflected—absorbed and satisfied. It is foolish to rule the world and the Jew knows it. They are crumbling material for the hands of their leaders, and ropes of sand. They have too much sense—and will go for the glittering garments and not murder Progress. They strike me as an inferior race, in spite of their great advantages. . . . But to return to the Jews, my long acquaintance with Klein and his club makes me at home with them—but I'm glad I haven't *more* Jewish blood in me than I have. I don't want any more. These people don't know anything. They have no religion, no customs except eating and drinking."

Note here again the specter of Jewish power. As Chapman watches a crowd of Jews behaving in a perfectly natural way, he concludes that they will not "rule the world." Why should he have expected them to?—and why should he be surprised that these citizens from New York and Philadelphia show an interest in their larders and their bank accounts? Do Americans of other stocks not give evidence of similar interests? Later on, he went even further and began to link the Jews with the Catholics in his attacks on the Catholic church. He actually got to the point of publishing in an organ of the Ku Klux Klan—the *National Kourier* of May 29, 1925—the following queer anti-Semitic sonnet:

How restful is it to survey the sea
From some low, windswept, silvery, sandy dune,
And watch the eternal climbing of the moon
Full-orbed, above the shore's complacency;
Wondering the while if Asian plains there be,
Or rock-walled valleys, never shined upon,—
Save by the perpendicular sun at noon,—
So safe, so guarded, so remote as we.

But see, a sail!—nay more,—from every land
They cloud the ocean, convoyed by a crew
Of Master Pirates who have work in hand:
Old Europe's nation-wreckers heave in view!
And lo, to aid them, on our margin stand
Our citizens,—the Jesuit and the Jew.

There is, I think, involved in Chapman's case, as perhaps in Lowell's also, a special relation to the Judaic element in the New England Puritan tradition. This tradition came to life again—after a partial eclipse during the early 1800's—in the Abolitionist crusade against slavery that inspired so much of the ardor of the Federal forces in the Civil War. "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" comes straight out of the Biblical Prophets, and the Old Testament Jehovah takes the field again at the head of the Federal armies. In the period before the war, Lowell had been stirred by this fervor—under the influence, it is said, of his first wife—and had worked for the Abolitionist cause; John Jay Chapman, who was proud of his grandmother, and had relived the Abolitionist movement in writing his book about Garrison, had once traveled to a Pennsylvania town where a Negro had been burned alive, to hold an expiatory meeting—a meeting at which he was the only speaker and to which only two people came. Both Lowell and Chapman, in their later years, more or less dropped crusading, somewhat lapsed in their

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faith. The former, Ambassador to the Court of St. James, became an official figure; the latter, having married a well-to-do wife, became the proprietor of a country estate and a somewhat petulant critic of everyone in literature and politics who was playing a more active part than he. Both, perhaps, had a bad conscience. In Lowell's case, he seems half to hope, half to fear, that the Puritan-Jewish Jehovah is going to take over the world; in Chapman's case, he seems—not admitting it—to be gnawed by a sense of guilt toward the moral inspiration of the Jews in which he has felt he shared: he accuses lest he stand condemned.

But there is something else, too, in this curious shift from a faith in the Jews to a fear of them. The basic thing here, I believe, is that the Jews have been all too successful in convincing the rest of the world of their privileged relations with God. They have made it all too easy for visionary people—that is, people like themselves—to assume that there is something supernatural about them. What Chapman, who had idealized the Jews on the evidence of the Bible and of his friend Mr. Klein, was so startled one day to realize, on the boardwalk at Atlantic City, was that German or Russian or Polish or Lithuanian Jewish Americans were human beings like everyone else. And yet for a certain type of mind—the apocalyptical kind—it is difficult to accept this conclusion. For such a mind, an awe of the Jews persists but it takes on a different aspect. It may turn to the extreme anti-Semitism of Hitler and Henry Ford—both idealistic cranks—which, as Waldo Frank has said in his study *The Jew in Our Day,* is a department of demonology. Or it may merely—as in Lowell's case—survive as a superstition, an uneasiness in the presence of something unknown, an uncomfortable apprehension. These people, unique in their cohesiveness, their inbreeding, their self-isolation, so impressive in their sureness of their contact with God, is there not something queer about them? Do they not possess special powers? May they not be masters of a magic that enables them to intrigue against us, to demoralize, subvert, destroy us? Nor is it, I think, out of the question that we ourselves, deep in our "psyches," may consider it correct that we should thus be destroyed in punishment for our own apostasy, our apostasy toward, precisely, the Jewish God—that apostasy of which both the Testaments have combined, at the basis of our moral training, to implant in us the sense of danger?

An odd non-American example of this tendency to credit the Jews with supernatural powers is to be found in the novels of Gerald du Maurier. I have not been able to discover in any of the biographical material about him that du Maurier himself had a Jewish strain but in each of his three novels a rather unexpected Jewish theme plays a more or less important role. In the first of these, *Peter Ibbetson,* we are told of the mother of Colonel Ibbetson that she "had been the only child and heiress of an immensely rich pawnbroker, by name Mendoza; a Portuguese Jew, with a dash of colored blood in his veins besides, it was said." But Peter himself is a nephew of the Colonel's on the latter's *paternal* side, and the Jewish character here is the villain. In *The Martian,* on the other hand, the third of the series, a woman with Jewish blood is the heroine. We are told of Leah Gibson that "her mother . . . was a Spanish Jewess—a most magnificent and beautiful old person in splendid attire, tall and straight, with white hair and thick black eyebrows, and large eyes as black as night. In Leah the high Sephardic Jewish type was more marked than in Mrs. Gibson. . . . It is a type that sometimes, just now and again, can be so pathetically noble and beautiful in a woman, so suggestive of chastity and the most passionate love combined—love conjugal and filial and maternal—love that implies all the big practical obligations and responsibilities of human life, that the mere term 'Jewess' (and especially its French equivalent) brings to my mind some vague, mysterious, exotically poetic image of all I love best in woman." But in the intermediate *Trilby,* du Maurier's conception of the Jew

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is developed in a major and a very strange way. We are told, in the first place, of Little Billee, one of the three English art students in Paris about whom the story centers, that "in his winning and handsome face there was just a faint suggestion of some possible very remote Jewish ancestor—just a tinge of that strong, sturdy, irrepressible, indomitable, indelible blood which is of such priceless value in diluted homeopathic doses, like the dry white Spanish wine called Montijo, which is not meant to be taken pure; but without a judicious admixture of which no sherry can go round the world and keep its flavor intact; or like the famous bull-dog strain, which is not beautiful in itself; and yet just for lacking a little of the same no greyhound can ever be a champion." Little Billee is thus the only one of the three companions who is shown to possess any genuine talent. But the great Jewish character in *Trilby* is, of course, the German Jewish Svengali: the fabulous musician who cannot sing but who, by hypnotizing the tone-deaf Trilby and exploiting her wonderful voice, makes of her a great artist. Svengali, in other connections, is always represented as everything that these gentlemanly Britishers most abhor: he is dirty, insulting, boastful, mendacious, malicious, quarrelsome; they have constantly to put him in his place. Yet Trilby, in spite of her voice, has not only no ear whatever for music, but no range of emotion or expression which would be adequate, even if she had one, to achieve the astounding effects which Svengali is able to teach her by turning her into a simple automaton. The concert—described at great length—at which Trilby so triumphantly sings, is "the apotheosis of voice and virtuosity"; it sounds like a combination of Yvette Guilbert and Adelina Patti. Yet—except for the voice itself—the whole thing is an emanation of Svengali's musical soul; and if this is true, the horrid Svengali must have, after all, as Bernard Shaw says, "better grounds for [his] egotism than anybody else in the book except Little Billee and Trilby." But from whence does all this subtlety and innocence, this tenderness and joy and sorrow, arise in the Svengali we know? There is no explanation of this: the character, in human terms, is not in any deep sense created. What is really behind Svengali is the notion, again, that the Jew, even in his squalidest form, is a mouthpiece of our Judaico-Christian God, whose voice he has, in this case, transferred, ventriloquially, to the throat of Trilby. There is always in these novels of du Maurier's—binational, bilingual as he was—a certain light playing-off of French civilization against English; but the picture is further complicated—it is one of the things that make them interesting—by this dual role of the Jew, who appears—Colonel Ibbetson, Svengali in his contacts of everyday—now as a malignant devil, whose malignancy is hardly accounted for; now—as in Leah, Little Billee, and the Svengali who animates Trilby—as a spirit from an alien world who carries with it an uncanny prestige, who may speak in a divine tongue.

In the meantime, for the Jew—or for many Jews—it must become almost as embarrassing to be taken for a Hebrew prophet with a private line to God as for a diabolical demiurge who is out to "murder progress"—whatever Chapman meant by that. I remember a clear illustration of this in a story told of himself by Dr. Paul Tillich of Union Theological Seminary in a discussion after one of his seminars. Dr. Tillich explained that he had never at first approved of the Zionist movement. He had thought it a good thing that a group—the Jews—should survive in the modern world to represent a religious faith independent of patriotism, whose Kingdom—since they had no country—could not be of this world. But it was then pointed out to him by a Jewish friend that he was being quite unfair to "the petty bourgeois Cohens and Levis" in expecting them to be Moseses and Isaiahs, and in restricting them to the status of aliens in countries in which they were still not accepted on quite the same basis as other natives and which were liable to anti-Semitic panics. Dr. Tillich was so struck by the justice of this that he at once joined a Zionist organization.

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THE BOOKS OF DOOM

Life and Death of the Shtetl

WILLIAM and SARAH SCHACK

A UNIQUE literature is being written on the life and death, during the last war, of the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. Nominally local history, its apocalyptic character sets it far apart from books that deal with the pasts of still surviving communities. Each chronicle ends in more or less the same way, with an account of the destruction wrought by the Nazis. A fearful story is told over and over again; there are many differences of detail but the burden is always the same, and so is the effect.

That these chronicles have not been issued by commercial publishers is not surprising. The few solid works published here and abroad on the Nazi holocaust have not found a large audience. Massacres make bitter reading.* We, the helpless and horrified bystanders at the death of six million Jews, have averted our eyes from the record almost as resolutely as the murderers themselves—who cannot bear to see told in print the crimes for which they can never be punished enough, and for which so few of them, comparatively, have been punished at all. This does not mean that we are as hard as they, or have as much or the same guilt to hide. It means only that we cannot truly feel the death of more than one person at a time.

The articles, pamphlets, and books to which we call attention here are not written primarily for us, the spectators, but by survivors for other survivors. The authors, most of them amateur writers, and less than amateur historians, cannot find the historical generalizations with which to gloss over the terrible events they record. They write as participants whose sole concern was survival; they could not have lived had they had a sense of *perspective*. And now they are simply chroniclers wanting to "talk out" their experiences in order to preserve their sanity, and to keep alive the memory of lost loved ones, friends, homes, places. Implicit in all these books is the sense of the value of every individual; each death, whether of young or old, the lowly or the illustrious, is a tragedy. That is the logic of the mutual responsibility so ingrained in Jewish tradition.

Yet even if it is not directly addressed to us, the outsiders, this literature of commemoration has a great deal to tell us. These books of doom, less schematic and patterned than any sociological or anthropological study, show us the Jews of Eastern Europe as *people*, living, struggling to survive, dying. And as people, they come very close to us in their suffering and in their will to life.

BY NOW the bibliography of the literature of destruction—it has been called the "Third Destruction," following that of the First and Second Temples—includes, with cross references, some 50,000 items. Almost 1,700 of these are eyewitness accounts. From Warsaw alone there are 1,500 items. The book-length *yizkor* (memorial) works with

*See Solomon F. Bloom's review in COMMENTARY, January 1955.

THE starkest, most vivid accounts of the Nazi slaughter of Jewish communities are to be found in the hundreds of privately printed chronicles called *yizkor* (memorial) books, compiled by survivors of the catastrophe. In the first of a two-part article, WILLIAM and SARAH SCHACK describe the literature as a whole and then go on to tell the story found in a representative *yizkor* book—*Pinkas Byten*. Mr. and Mrs. Schack's "The Schooling of Abraham Cahan" was published in our November 1954 number; Mr. Schack's own most recent appearance was with his two-part survey of contemporary synagogue art, in December 1955 and February 1956.

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which we are concerned here number several hundred, written in Yiddish, Hebrew, English, German, Polish, and French; and published in Warsaw, Tel Aviv, Munich, Melbourne, Johannesburg, Mexico City, Montreal, Paris, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and Buenos Aires. The two-volume *Wolkovisker Yizkor Book,* for example, contains a ninety-page article in English by Dr. Moses Einhorn, the editor, who also contributed five hundred pages of the Yiddish text.

Most of these books are sponsored by *landsmanshaften,* societies of fellow townsmen who, now that there is nothing else they can do for the folks back home, have undertaken to commemorate them. Hence in most cases the books deal with particular places and their environs: Becotov, Bzanov, Brainsk, Karetz, Kosev Polski, Krinik, Yavarov, Zamoshitz, Zaromb, Zlotshe. Most numerous and most outstanding are the volumes that deal with the Polish and Lithuanian Pale, but there are also valuable books on Galicia, Rumania, and the Ukraine.

For scholars, these works are not "scientific" enough. As Dr. Philip Friedman points out, they lack a sense of history and are too much concerned with sheer reminiscence, folklore, personal experiences, odd episodes—all of it given indiscriminately and without coordination; they romanticize, suppressing unpleasant details. The late Dr. Jacob Shatzky pointed out that their lack of historical perspective is most conspicuously demonstrated in the fact that they pay so little attention to the period before 1914 and overstress the period 1914-1939. Some have statistical pretensions; others are marked by political bias and give most of their space to the local Zionists or Bundists, depending on which faction was in control of the work. Books that do begin with an objective historical approach and proper documentation go over before long into reportage, autobiography, panegyric. And occasionally there is bad taste, as in the *yizkor* book recently published on Koidenov, which is full of personal advertisements (the excuse being that they are needed to cover the costs of production. Nearly half of the 467 pages of this purported memorial to a whole community are given over to stories and poems by Abraham Raisin, who was born in Koidenov, but settled in the United States back in 1914!).

Yet it is pointless to judge these books by professional standards. Those who wrote them have good reason to be historically myopic. Survivors of perhaps the most horrible episode in all history, they may well be oblivious to any other time than their own. The very narrowness of their vision makes it capable of an intensity that has its own value as truth and testimony.

Dr. Shatzky observed that no comprehensive study as yet exists of the resistance, both open and underground, carried on in the Jewish ghettos. By all means, let one be written. But the better *yizkor* books will certainly remain an indispensable source for those professional historians who undertake that survey, as well as for others.

There are now at least two agencies for the production of scholarly work on the massacres: the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, of New York, which had its origin in Vilna in 1925, and Yad Va-shem, an official Israeli undertaking to create memorials of various kinds to the Jewish victims of the Nazis. Both organizations have jointly initiated three research projects, financed by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. One project is for a bibliographic manual on the destruction, now almost ready for publication. Another will catalogue such archival material as documents from the Heinrich Himmler files; the diaries of the Nazi governor-general of Poland, Hans Frank; 1,700 eyewitness accounts of the killings; and classified military documents from the files of General Alfred Jodl. The third of the joint projects is an encyclopedia, *Pinkas Hakehillot,* of the 25,000 Jewish communities of Europe, most of which are now extinct. All these publications will be presented in English, Yiddish, and Hebrew.

PINKAS BYTEN (The Book of Byten), written in Yiddish and published in

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Buenos Aires by Die Bytener Landsleit of Argentina, is typical of the *yizkor* books. To most readers the name of Byten will be as unfamiliar as those of the majority of other villages that are the subjects of this literature. There were thousands of them with their Jewish communities. Some have already been mentioned, but there were also Lukov, Mezeritch, Pilz, Klementov, Padliashe, Sosnowca, Stzegove, Horodetz, Rakichok, and so on and on. (Second-generation Jews in this country seem to lack interest in the places of origin of their parents; the third generation seldom even know of them.)

For Byten, *the* big town was Slonim, eighteen miles to the northwest, with its 25,000 Jews, a city called "Mother in Israel." Still farther to the west—maybe a hundred miles—was the metropolis, Bialystok. But tiny Byten was as much a microcosm of Jewish life in Eastern Europe as they. Its ways were those of all the other *shtetlach* and, to a great extent, of the cities themselves of the Pale. Its ordinary folk were like theirs, and even its outstanding people, if they did not attain the eminence of a Chaim Weizmann of Motele, bore a family resemblance to the great of most other towns. And what happened to the Jews of Byten under the Nazis happened, with gruesome variations, to almost all the other Jewish communities; the table of contents of *Pinkas Byten* is very much like those of most other *yizkor* books.

To tell what their community was like, in peace and in war, in its "rise and fall" (as the subtitle of the book has it), the survivors have put together a big volume of more than 600 pages containing some 300,000 words. The fifty-odd pieces in it were written by thirty natives of Byten, and two of them—Dodl Abramovitch, in Israel, and Mordecai V. Bernstein, in Argentina—gathered together and in some measure coordinated the heterogeneous material. Mr. Bernstein is probably the only one among the contributors who is a professional writer, yet most of the others are keen observers and the urgency of their subject compels them to write with surprising concreteness. It keeps them from hunting for the "imaginative" phrase, and if their language is pedestrian, it is not sown with those purple passages to which amateur writers are prone.

As in other *yizkor* volumes, the photographs in *Pinkas Byten* are of surpassing interest. It is understandable that they are only fair technically, and it hardly matters: but both the clear and blurred pictures have a revealing and often touching quality (of which we shall say more later). A rough map shows where in its world obscure Byten stood, near what highways and railroads (it was about four miles from the nearest station, Demanova, on the Moscow-Brest-Litovsk line), near what forests and swamps (these last became in the end refuges, or at least less ignominious places to die in than the accustomed streets and alleys).

PINKAS BYTEN opens and closes with verses by Shimen Rodel commemorating *unser shtetele* and expressing faith that the blood of the martyrs had not been shed in vain. There are sober accounts of the town's economic resources and past by co-editor Bernstein (who began his scholarly study of this *shtetl* before the war), the proud record of its cultural activities, the story of the forced labor its Jews were compelled to do by the Germans during the First World War (when some of them had eagerly waited for "Reb Velvele"—better known to history as Kaiser Wilhelm II—to liberate them from "Nicolaike" the Czar; it was not such a fantastic idea at that, since in other places the German soldiers behaved quite decently to Jews). One piece tells of the relief sent to Byten during that hard period by Bytener settled in the United States (it had once been considered a calamity to have to leave the town, but the emigrants became its mainstay at this time, when even the formerly well-to-do were glad to receive charity "secretly"); there are letters from survivors and from those who did not survive (one, in Polish, written by a little girl pictured in the book in a dancing costume with angel's wings, was included in Ilya Ehrenburg's book *Murderers of Nations*); and

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reminiscences of favorite promenades and trysting places and illustrious persons.

The heavy heart of the book consists, however, of two long narratives supplemented by several short ones: Moshe Pitkowsky's bluntly titled and simply told "How the Jewish Community in Byten Was Destroyed," and co-editor Abramovitch's stormier "Destruction and Resistance."

Byten being in that part of White Russia which was incorporated in the revived state of Poland after World War I, its Jews were caught between the cross-hatreds of the minority ruling class of Poles and the White Russian and largely peasant majority. In the early days of the Second World War, the Poles began working themselves up for a large-scale pogrom, but the Russians, thrusting southward in the rear of the disintegrating Polish army, occupied Byten in time to prevent it. In the confusion of marches and counter-marches, the possibilities of espionage and sabotage, of suspicion and misunderstanding, were great. Many White Russians collaborated with the Germans; others became partisans and fought them; the rest simply did what was necessary to survive. Informers, venal and patriotic, and peasants simply frightened into becoming informers brought death to some Jews at the hands of Russians, Germans, or Poles. But there were also peasants who helped Jewish friends at the risk—and sometimes the cost—of their lives. All this went on in and around the little village of Byten.

What emerges from these diverse narratives is how the individuals of a whole community were destroyed. It was not an old settlement, but it was a vital one. Some Jewish communities in Poland went back a thousand years, but Byten had begun only some three hundred years ago as an inn on a Polish nobleman's estate. In time blacksmiths, millers, and tradesmen drifted in from surrounding villages. After two centuries Byten's population amounted to only 975 persons, of whom 509 were Jews. The latter figure eventually more than trebled, fell off, and then rose to about 1,300 in 1940.

Unlike many of the small Jewish communities which lived by taking in each other's washing, by petty trade, Byten once had had a substantial economic foundation. Most important was the textile factory established by an energetic Polish nobleman in the 18th century. There were also a large tannery and a group of industries based on the rich forests which surround the town on three sides—timber-cutting, logging, sawmills. When the Russian army retreated in 1915, it burnt down factory and tannery along with the rest of the town—everything but the firehouse! In the early 1930's, the Polish government encouraged a more intensive exploitation of the timberlands, but after a few years it nationalized the logging industry, displacing not only Jewish owners but also Jewish labor.

As long as things were relatively easy, the traditional Jewish way of life flourished in Byten, though modern ways, too, eventually gained a strong foothold. The Old Synagogue (also called the "Cold Synagogue" because it was without heating facilities, which restricted its use to the Sabbath and holidays) was three stories high, a notable example of the wooden synagogues of Northeastern Europe which often attained architectural distinction; its interior was enhanced by extensive mural decorations based on floral and animal motifs. In the same *Shulhof* (synagogue court) was the Big Synagogue, where the quality held daily services, as well as the Tailors' Synagogue, which served all sorts of workmen. Off in the shabby lane of the *hekdish* (a communal lodging house for poor travelers and the town's permanently indigent, e.g., the chimney-sweep and his family) was a Hasidic *shtibl* whose members practiced their principles of simple and joyful living. In a "faraway" section of town called the "New City" were two more houses of worship.

This much is pattern. But life overflowed the boundaries of pattern. The separate synagogues for working people and *baale batim* did not mean that the former were lowly fellows who knew their places. Shmuel

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the blacksmith was the best leader of services (*baal tefilah*) in town, and Motya the blacksmith one of the most learned. The congregation of the Tailors' Synagogue had as much to say about the hiring of the town's rabbi and cantor as their well-heeled brethren. Byten's cantor was selected with as much care as the leading tenor of the Metropolitan Opera House: it once took two years of try-outs before the right one was found. And when the Big Synagogue, having burned down along with the rest of the town in 1915, was rebuilt and a new rabbi was brought into town, not horses but the fellows from the Tailors' Synagogue had the honor of drawing his carriage.

Since the entire life of the community—not merely its religious observances—was centered in the synagogue, most social services were supervised, more or less directly, by the rabbi, his assistant (*dayan*), the trustees, and lesser officials. Though its entire population could have been put into a few of our big apartment houses, Byten had a fire department, health clinic, bathhouse, and loan bank. And the community provided, specifically for the poor, a free school (Talmud Torah), brides' dowries (all marriages were publicly celebrated, for three or four days, and everyone, invited or not, came), food—at least matzos and meat—for Passover, and free burial at the expense of those who had died rich. In fact, the rich were pressed to contribute to all needs not met out of the special tax that the government levied on kosher poultry and cattle to support the Jewish community's undertakings and cover the district administration's costs. The rabbi himself would make the rounds of the well-to-do to collect funds for the needy. But to show that money wasn't everything, the members of genteel families —particularly the women-folk—were also called on to do home nursing at all hours for the sick who could not afford to hire help. At the same time the community also dispensed hospitality and provided accommodations for visitors of all sorts—preachers, yeshiva *bochurim*, authors, booksellers, institutional representatives, fund-raisers for good causes, and the like. It was considered an honor to put such guests up.

THE dominating position of religion in Byten did not preclude the rise of a workers' movement. Students who went to the large towns were exposed to modern ideas and brought them home; so did the tanners and weavers who traveled to work in Bialystok; nor were local factory hands immune: most of them became Bundists or Zionist Socialists. Whatever their theoretical program, the demands were hardly drastic when it came to Byten's first strike, in 1902. The tailors' apprentices, who staged it, were then working six days a week and after sundown on Saturdays: what they demanded, and won, was Saturday night off. But the failure of the Revolution of 1905 sent the radicals underground, as elsewhere in Russia, and it was not until after 1914 that the Bundists in Byten dared reveal themselves publicly again.

The spread of social consciousness brought with it from the first, even in small-town Byten, a crossing of class lines. Garfinkel, the textile magnate, who wore a top hat on the Sabbath, may have looked askance at the presumptuous radicals, but his daughter Rashke, a medical student, preached socialism. Jacob S. Bulanski, who came of a rich family, left the yeshiva where he was studying, to become an active Bundist as well as something of a hero to his comrades. Youth in general fell into "lax habits": rich boys went out with poor girls, and vice versa. Yet the radicals did not throw off the old traditions easily. During the Revolution of 1905, the youth of Byten staged a demonstration against the Czar. It was on a Friday night, but some of them were smoking cigarettes just to show what rebels they were. Reb Laibele, who was not only the town's *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) but a scholar, Hasid, and everybody's good friend and advisor, came along. Without waiting for his reproach, the smokers threw their butts away.

The pride of the Bundists was their I. L. Peretz Library, which was started clandestinely, after the strike of the tailors' ap-

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prentices, with a few illegal pamphlets. While the run of the people were reading the romantic tales brought in from the bigger towns by peddlers and coachmen, the serious-minded began to collect the literature of socialism. Books and pamphlets circulated in secret; people caught with them were liable to be exiled to Siberia. Not until the Red Army came in 1919, for a brief stay, was the library legalized. It then opened a public reading room, sponsored discussions, theatricals, handicrafts. The Poles, who took Byten over the following year, shut the library and some of its books were buried, but others were circulated cautiously from house to house. Under the secret direction of the Bund, the library re-opened as the headquarters of a "Culture League." Later it was again able to call itself a library, but that lasted only four years. With the unemployment brought on by the nationalization of the lumber industry, it had to close again, this time for lack of support.

Meanwhile a rival Zionist library (named after Yosef Chaim Brenner, a prominent local Labor Zionist who had been killed by Arabs in Palestine) had come into existence. It had no funds, but its members, who all belonged to the Halutz movement, contributed such Yiddish and Hebrew books as they had, and some of the boys stole lumber to build a bookcase (as Y. L. Abramovitch relates). At its peak, this second pride of the town had fifteen hundred volumes—all of which were destroyed in the disaster.

Jews who lived in the smaller surrounding hamlets brought a rustic flavor to Byten, which was their cultural center. These *yishuvnikes* were often well-to-do leaseholders of timber properties, respected and trusted advisors to the local Polish gentry, and they contributed substantially to the institutions of the town. To Byten they came to celebrate the holidays, to arrange for their children's schooling, to visit relatives, to see the Goldfaden plays staged by the amateur Dramatic Circle, and to attend the big fairs held in midsummer and fall to which both Jews and Gentiles brought their wares: from bagels to mushrooms, from hats to hogs' bristles. The poor sold tea and cookies. The daring ones could try their luck at roulette. Children stayed away from school during these three days of merriment, quarreling, and petty thievery; and when the fair was over, conscripts passing through Byten would overturn the tables and dump whatever merchandise was left—unless the strong-arm volunteers of the Fire Brigade were there to restrain them. Ninety-nine per cent Jewish, the fire-fighters were also an unofficial police force; and when their building was used for lectures, plays, meetings, or weddings, they acted as ushers.

Byten an obscure village? But "it was known far beyond its borders" for its Reb Mordchele, the sage who came to Byten in 1870 and whose services were so highly valued that one village after another "kidnapped" him. After the Bytener spirited him out of Antopolia, his birthplace, the Karelitzer carried him off on their shoulders to their own town; it was in Slonim, however, that the great rabbi ended his days. Some people considered him a miracle-worker: he had relieved eye-twitchers of their tics, made cripples walk again, and soothed disturbed minds. Probably the psychology books of that time had not caught up with Reb Mordchele's discovery that the way to cure sick people was to help them overcome their fears and regain self-confidence.

Byten's last rabbi, Jacob Ben-Zvi Joffe, was a man of parts, able to assimilate both the old and new learning. He dealt with Russian officials in their own language and went to them on behalf of both Gentiles and Jews. Rounded up for the first mass slaughter by the Nazis, he refused to undress before being shot, and went down with at least some particle of the dignity of a Jew and a man.

In Byten also lived one Avrom Yaakov Bruck; he, declining to be its rabbi, preferred to make his living as a glazier. What a Jewish scholar should know, he knew; and he also knew how to build his own house. An enthusiastic Zionist when few

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religious Jews yet were, he was a delegate to the first Zionist Congress in Basel; his house was a center for youth, for anyone interested in migrating to Palestine. And this good Jew, whose high spirits fought down his chronic asthma, was consulted by priests as well as his own people. So was Byten's jolly good fellow, and a smart one—Chayim Yudkowsky—popular among Jews and Gentiles for his imitations of Charlie Chaplin. The town had its dedicated teachers, most of them humble, but one at least—M. A. Kushnirovsky—attaining fame as a teacher of Hebrew by modern methods that included visual aids and dramatics.

ONE has only to look at the photographs in *Pinkas Byten* to realize that, by and large, this was a community of vigorous people. Here is a keen-looking young woman and two men, well-dressed, mounting their bicycles on New Street; here is the radiant face of Reb Motoske, who was Byten's revered rabbi for thirty years, until 1912, and Reb Mordchele with his penetrating, almost hypnotic eyes. There are also pictures of Berel Feivish, the archetypal *nebichl* of a *shammes*, and many other plain people, work-worn, shabbily dressed, clustered around family tombstones. Some sentimental pictures, too: four self-conscious young women in a *tableau vivant* at a favorite picnic place, in harmony with another picture of the Little River just behind the Little Bridge as it makes a romantic curve. On other pages you see the lively faces of the men of the Fire Brigade, the serious and intelligent faces of the guiding spirits of the two libraries, of the thirty-four members of the Culture League, the Keren Kayemeth Committee, the Pioneer Youth. Could the murderers have looked any of these people in the eyes before shooting them down?

The popular Yiddish ditty *Mein Shtetele Belz* could just as well have been called, except that it does not scan as well, *Mein Shtetele Byten*. At a few years' remove and in foreign parts, its people could become sentimental about it. To I. M. Rabinovitch ("*Byten, Mein Shtetele*") there's no synagogue like the Old Shul, and no park like the Pooster Sud, a stretch of beautiful greensward bordered by fine trees where the folks used to promenade of a Saturday afternoon and young couples could find secluded nooks. In every *yizkor* book people go strolling on a Saturday afternoon until dark down a favorite lane, on some river bank, or along some lake shore.

The trouble began in Byten when the Germans were besieging Warsaw early in September 1939. The railroad was barred to civilians; no newspapers arrived; there were air raids all around the area. Meanwhile, the White Russians, who formed 90 per cent of the population of the area, were delighted to hear that the Polish army was being crushed. Then events began to overtake each other. About the middle of the month, a rumor spread that the Germans had occupied Ruzhnoi, some twenty-five miles away, and people began to bury their valuables in the ground.

But the Soviet army was even closer. To welcome it with banners, several White Russians entered the shop of a Jew with whom they were friendly and demanded red cloth. The man was in a dilemma because the Polish officials of Byten were still around and were executing Communist sympathizers on sight. So he produced a bolt of cloth that was half-red and half-white, from which the Russians stripped the red part. Immediately, the shopkeeper was assailed by angry fellow Jews fearful of the Poles. Fortunately, the Poles fled into the forest, whereupon the White Russians paraded through the town and took it over in the name of the Soviet army. That afternoon the Germans bombed nearby Baranovitch and there was a panic in Byten. For three days it was without local government. Then Soviet tanks rolled in.

Soon the ruble replaced the zloty as the medium of exchange, and people bought up everything in the shops for nothing. Then prices rose 400 per cent. In the general state of disruption, infirmaries, libraries, and the loan bank were shut down. People became confused and dejected. There was peace in

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the town, but it was like the peace of death. But the Bytener didn't know then how dead a town could really be.

ON JUNE 22, 1941, a Sunday, Molotov announced over the radio that the Germans had crossed the Russian frontier, the one fixed by treaty with the Nazis less than a year before. Soon after, Soviet planes flew over the town—going in the wrong direction—and truckloads of retreating soldiers and officers came through. Again there was panic, but the highways and the railroad were being bombed, and transportation was paralyzed. Only a few Jews got away on bicycles. Others dug trenches—a futile gesture. Germans began to filter in singly; by Wednesday night they had occupied the town and everyone stayed inside his house. On the next day the invaders began the first of a series of lootings in which all their henchmen took a hand. To expedite their work, they set up, as they did everywhere else, a Jewish liaison group, the *Judenrat*, which was to furnish on demand labor, food, clothing, money—whatever the Germans asked for. An officer passing through Byten ordered three hundred and fifty Jews out to repair the war-torn roads, and the detail being short eight men, Jewish women made up the difference. After that there were constant requisitions for forced labor. One group had to walk five miles to their assignment and back every day.

In August Jews were ordered to wear a white armband bearing the Shield of David in yellow; later, the order was changed to a yellow patch with a Shield of David to be worn on the left breast and left shoulder. In September the Germans removed the eight Torahs of the Big Synagogue, and trampled and burned them in the public square. Under German direction, a detail of Lithuanians stepped up the rate of looting; one day became known as "the Wednesday of the Lithuanians," and Jews began to suspect that this was but a prelude. In November they heard about the first slaughter, of 9,000 brethren in Slonim. In December the *Judenrat* was ordered to produce four and a half pounds of gold, all the remaining valuables owned by Jews, and 200,000 rubles. Arbuz the dentist was kept busy pulling gold teeth.

Rumors came through of worse things happening in neighboring villages. Even so, writes Meyer Joffe ("Between the Dying and Death"), "Some wholehearted optimists still try to wrestle with the merciless reality. They say, 'Who knows what people won't figure out? They're only panicky. You can't believe them.' To sustain their exaggerated optimism they fall back on the new kind of patriotism—local pride. 'Granted,' they say, 'in Slonim, in Baranovitch, in Deretchin—maybe, do I know? The folks there must have done something. But here in Byten? What complaints can they have against our honest, peaceful Jews? Did we do them any harm? No, nothing will happen here. . . .' Or they say, 'They won't live to see the day.' That's how one swings over from 'logical' argument to sweet soporific prophecy. 'Any minute now they'll be catching it at the front—just wait and see. . . . Seems to me I hear something in the distance, something like heavy cannon fire. . . .'" But before long not even the incorrigible optimists were unmoved by the news of the wiping out of Zireveh, Baranovitch, Lechovitch.

Russian guerrillas—soldiers left behind by the retreating Soviet army—were known to be in the neighborhood. But some Bytener didn't realize they were friends. All they knew was that if the Russians killed Germans, who would pay for it? "There will be a hundred dead Jews for every dead German." With the police ever watchful, it was impossible for any great number of people to flee to the forest; and it was not easy to find the Russians. Besides, every Jew was responsible for every other Jew: how could some run away and leave the others to their fate? The only cheerful place in town was Hannah Ditkowsky's candy store: here they could still sit around like human beings, talking, playing cards, eating sweets, though completely without hope.

[*To be continued*]

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NORTH AFRICA MEETS THE MODERN WORLD

Islam and Democracy in Morocco and Tunisia

BENJAMIN RIVLIN

THE men who led the peoples of Morocco and Tunisia in their successful struggle for independence, achieved only this past year, and who now direct the destinies of these new nations, are in a position like that of most successful candidates for political office: they have won and they have to produce. The platform upon which they ran was somewhat vague. Its ambiguities, even contradictions, created no particular problems and caused them no great concern in the midst of the fight for independence, when the sole objective was to win. But now that victory is theirs, these cannot be easily glossed over. What have the Moroccan and Tunisian nationalists promised their peoples, and what problems do these promises pose for the new governments? In particular, what sort of future can the non-Moslem minorities, notably the French and the Jews, look forward to in independent Morocco and Tunisia in the light of these promises and problems?

Moroccan and Tunisian nationalism were both based upon the conviction that French colonial rule was alien and oppressive. National independence would make it possible to replace this rule by self-government in accordance with native traditions and culture, and to substitute for an oppressive colonial administration a democratic regime with the welfare of the native population at heart. This was the double promise held out by the Moroccan and Tunisian nationalists. It was, obviously, a very general promise and admitted of a wide range of conflicting interpretation.

ALIEN rule is objectionable anywhere, but particularly so when imposed on a strongly traditional culture such as exists in Morocco and Tunisia. The Moslem-Arab tradition in North Africa stubbornly maintained itself despite all the Western influences introduced by the French. Fundamentally, it was the spirit of Islam that steeled this resistance, and the political expression of this spirit is what constitutes the essence of Tunisian and Moroccan nationalism.* The latter's leaders therefore have no choice but to establish regimes consistent in temper with the Islamic and Arabic heritage of the two countries.

The second part of the nationalist program called for the creation of a democratic society. But what is meant specifically by "democratic"? The literature of North African nationalism overflows with professions of devotion to democracy, some of them vague and some of them not so vague. Typical of the latter is the following statement by Ahmed Balafrej, Secretary General of the Istiqlal party of Morocco and that country's

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NEWLY independent Morocco and Tunisia are undergoing a transition in which much seems confused, but there is a pattern to the confusion, as BENJAMIN RIVLIN shows here. An authority on North African and Arab affairs, Mr. Rivlin is assistant professor of political science at Brooklyn College—where he received his A.B., going on to take his master's and doctorate at Harvard. He was born in Brooklyn in 1921. Though this is his first appearance in COMMENTARY, he has contributed to such publications as *The Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, the *Middle East Journal*, the *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, and the *American Political Science Review*. He is now conducting research in France on Islamic and North African problems.

*For an analysis of the political, social, and economic development of North African nationalism, see the author's "Context and Sources of Political Tension in French North Africa," *The Annals*, March 1955.

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new Foreign Minister, conveying as it does the aspirations of the more Western-oriented and liberal-minded leaders of the new regimes. "The Moroccan people," he writes in the April 1956 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, "cherish the hope of exercising the attributes of effective sovereignty and of seeing a regime of liberty, equality and democracy established in their country. They expect to enjoy freedom of expression, thought, assembly and movement such as exists in independent sovereign nations. They aspire, in other words, to a respectable way of life. They think it will be assured by exploiting the country's riches efficiently and distributing them in a manner to raise the standard of living, absorb unemployment and guarantee quiet and well being for all."

How authentic is this declaration of faith? One is not inclined to doubt the Islamic and Arabic aspirations of the North African nationalists, which reflect an actual heritage and past. But would not this clasping to one's bosom of the foreign ideals of Western liberalism and social democracy seem to smack of hollow opportunism? And undoubtedly some Tunisian and Moroccan nationalists have struck liberal poses so as to curry favor with the Western democracies. Yet there are others among the nationalists for whom liberalism is not at all an alien ideal.

In Morocco and Tunisia, nationalism—as practically everywhere else—is in part a product of Western liberal thought. The ideal of democracy has, from the outset, been almost as much a source of inspiration for the nationalist movements in Tunisia and Morocco as the Islamic and Arabic ideal. Almost all the Tunisian Neo-Destour leaders and a good many of the Moroccan Istiqlal leaders are Paris-educated—which means that the French Revolution has been their school. It is significant that the Tunisian nationalist party chose to call itself "Destour" (meaning "constitution" in Arabic), and that the Plan de Réformes drafted by the Comité d'Action Marocaine, precursor of the present native political parties in Morocco, was so strongly democratic and liberal that a none too sympathetic French specialist in North African affairs, Professor Robert Montagne, described it as a "doctor's thesis on rights." The central importance of the democratic ideal to the new leaders of Tunisia and Morocco is reflected in a recent comment by Habib Bourguiba, Neo-Destour leader, upon taking office as Prime Minister of Tunisia: "The independence which we have bought at a price of great sacrifice will be an empty word if it does not come to signify at the same time the creation of a modern, democratic, and social state."

Still, pronouncements about democracy do not constitute democracy, no matter how often made; there is bound to be a gap between ideal and reality under the best of circumstances. How large will it be in Morocco and Tunisia? A similar gap exists between the Islamic and the Arabic ideal on one hand, and reality on the other. There is difficulty right off in the generality of the ideas proclaimed by the Moroccan and Tunisian nationalists; different groups among the nationalists will make different and often clashing interpretations of these, and disagree about their relative importance. Some will put Islamic tradition first, others will insist on the needs and "destiny" of Arab nationalism, and still others will stress democratic institutions and economic reforms. It must not be forgotten that the North African nationalist parties are coalitions of groups of varying tendencies banded together in common opposition to foreign domination, not a doctrinaire, monolithic organization. Now that independence is a fact, each of these groups is bound to go off in its own direction, thus risking collision with other groups.

All the nationalists identify themselves with the Islamic tradition, but this tradition means different things to different groups, in Morocco especially. There is no doctrinal unity in Islam, even within the individual Moslem states. In North Africa, the Islamic tradition can mean the fundamentalist purism of the Kairouyine and Zitounia mosques of Fez and Tunis, the heterodox mysticism of the brotherhoods, the non-Koranic customary law of many Berber

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tribes, or even the secularism of the Westernized elements of the educated élite, whose identification with Islam is not doctrinal but emotional. Which version of Islamic tradition will prevail and shape the policy and actions of the new governments?

This problem is a bigger, harder one for Morocco than for Tunisia. In Morocco the nationalist movement saw Westernized secularists allied with Islamic purists whose struggle was as much against the non-orthodox practices of the religious brotherhoods and Berber tribes as against the French. The presence of the purists in the new Moroccan government is bound to influence policy toward the support of orthodoxy. The Westernized nationalists in the government, despite their secularism, may very well agree to this in their desire to fight the ignorance and superstition prevalent among the brotherhoods and tribes, and perhaps even because they will see Islamic orthodoxy as a means of integrating the nation. But a falling out between secularists and Islamic purists over the issue of Morocco's secularization is always possible.* As they move to transform Morocco into a modern state, the secularists are bound to press for the elimination of those things in orthodox Moslem doctrine which stand in the way of modernization. In view of their zealotry, it is unlikely that the purists will give in without a fight.

Some of the dilemmas came to the fore last July during Sultan Mohammed V's triumphant tour of Morocco, which *Le Monde*, in Paris, characterized as an "operation aimed at rallying the people to him." The theme of the Sultan's tour was national unity, central authority, a single law, and justice (Koranic justice) for all. Stressing the unifying influence of the Islamic tradition in his country, the Sultan declared that "it had cemented the union of its inhabitants, and made them into a powerful and jointly responsible nation that no force in the world could divide. . . ." Denouncing as divisive the famous Berber Dahir of the 1930's which tried to establish the legitimacy of traditional tribal law in place of Koranic law for the Berber tribes, he said: "Our people have placed themselves in the shadow of Islam and will not permit any discrimination between Arabs and Berbers. . . ."

But to make this strong profession of faith in the Islamic unity of Morocco was also to declare it for what it was: a goal—a difficult one—and not a reality. As a correspondent put it in *Le Monde* (July 13, 1956): "The sovereign is anxious to unite his country, but as a shrewd politician he has to be sure to say [in an address to Berber tribesmen]: 'It is our sincere intention to send you only competent officials acquainted with your ways and customs and distinguished by their integrity, whose duty it will be to favor your own interests and earn your confidence and respect.'" In this same spirit of deference to local interests and tradition, Mohammed V reappointed as a tribal leader one of the very same men who had conspired with El Glaoui and the French to bring about his deposition in 1953. We can be sure that this concession to Berber particularism did not sit well with the Islamic purists and the Arab nationalists. Although there is little they can do about it right now, it must be expected that they will eventually try to assert the supremacy of the Arabic-Islamic heritage over Berber particularism. Thus the conflict shaping up in Morocco over the kind of Islamic tradition that will prevail there would seem to be a three-way one between fundamentalist-purists, local traditionalists, and Western secularists.

The problem of unity is easier in Tunisia, which is a smaller and more homogeneous country than Morocco. Local traditions and tribal organizations play an almost insignificant role in Tunisia. Westernized secularism, represented by the Neo-Destour party, dominates the new government and enjoys more popular support than in Morocco, while the Islamic purists, concentrated in the weak Old Destour party, which has no voice in the government, and around the Zitounia

*On this question, see the author's "Cultural Conflict in French North Africa," *The Annals*, July 1956.

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Mosque, have only a limited following. The main problem facing the new Tunisian government is how to maintain the Islamic tradition while instituting domestic reforms that tend to secularize Tunisian life. Thus Prime Minister Bourguiba recently announced his government's decision to reform the traditional marriage and divorce practices, heretofore under Koranic law, by outlawing polygamy and easy divorce. Of even greater significance is the government's reorganization of the judicial system: the separate jurisdiction of Koranic courts has been abolished and the secular Tunisian courts have been given jurisdiction over all civil, social, and criminal matters.

The Old Destour party cannot be expected to be happy over these reforms. Though not in the government, Old Destour ideas are represented in the Tunisian Constituent Assembly (which is drafting a constitution for the country). Only last April the government had to yield to pressure from this quarter and proclaim Islam, in Article One of the Draft Constitution, as the official religion of Tunisia. So far this declaration has not prevented the government from proceeding with its secularist program, but its inclusion testifies to the strong emotional hold Islam continues to have in Tunisia. It is too early yet to judge what consequences the proclamation of Islam as the state religion of Tunisia will have for non-Moslem minorities, mainly Jews and Europeans. The Islamic "church" may show a tolerance like that of the Anglican Church in England, or it may seek to dominate like the Catholic Church in Spain. But if one judges by what has happened in other Moslem states, the outlook is none too good for the minorities.

THE Islamic *and* the Arab traditions have been mentioned. Are there differences? Especially, are there differences between the two in Arab North Africa (called the Maghreb in Arabic), whither Islam was brought by Arabs, and where the Arabic language, unlike what happened in many other parts of the Islamicized world, conquered together with Islam (though Berber tongues are still spoken in many places in the hinterland and mountains)? Despite the difficulty in drawing clear distinctions, there are differences.

Islam is a universal religion and worldwide movement that is not confined to Arabic-speaking peoples. It is broad and tolerant of localisms, and varies from region to region in accordance with local custom and tradition. Thus the phrase "Islamic tradition," as it is used here, has meant the more or less easy-going recognition of the divergencies from orthodoxy in doctrine, customs, and practices found among the peoples of the Maghreb.

On the other hand, the Arab tradition, in Morocco and Tunisia, means identification with a much narrower and more homogeneous group than the broad Islamic community, and an identification of a much more intense and emotional sort. Arab identification tends to be stronger in the cities, and strongest of all among the Islamic purists there. Put simply, it means a deep attachment to the unity of the Arab world as one nation. On the surface, many of the prerequisites of such a common nationality—a common language, religion, and history—seem to exist among the peoples of the Arab world. Nevertheless, the multitudinous separatist and particularist sentiments and interests that divide them make the realization of a unified Arab state most unlikely, in North Africa as elsewhere. For the time being, Pan-Arabism must therefore take the form of a mere movement to promote Arab solidarity of action, while the ideal of Arab political, organizational unity remains a dream.

For Moroccans and Tunisians, identification with Arab tradition means supporting other Arab peoples in their struggles for independence, and championing the unity of Arab interests everywhere. Many of today's leaders in Morocco and Tunisia were at one time under the influence of Shakeeb Arslan, the outstanding Pan-Arabist of the 1920's and 1930's, who encouraged Moroccan and Tunisian nationalism as incipient forms of Pan-Arab nationalism. Typical of this identification with the Arab world as a

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whole is a statement made by Sultan Mohammed V in Tangier on April 11, 1947: "Needless to say, Morocco is an Arab country closely attached to the Arab East; it is natural, therefore, that these ties should grow closer and stronger, particularly so since the Arab League has become an organization playing an important role in world politics."

As the North African nationalists' struggle for independence grew more intense during the past ten years, their ties with the Arab states became closer. Tunisian and Moroccan leaders have visited Egypt and other Arab countries frequently, conferring with Arab League leaders, and affirming their solidarity with the Arab world. A Maghreb office was opened in Cairo, and when the Moroccan and Tunisian questions came up before the United Nations the Arab member-states led the fight on behalf of the North Africans.

But despite these close ties, Moroccan and Tunisian identification with the Arab world is by no means a settled matter. For some, Arab solidarity is an all-consuming passion and they will not rest until Morocco and Tunisia are solidly in the Arab League, pursuing an essentially Arab policy. But there are many other Tunisians and Moroccans who are content to acknowledge their Arabic cultural heritage but eschew involvement in Arab politics.

This question of Arab identification is by no means an abstract one and has already confronted Morocco and Tunisia with practical problems. During the drafting of the Tunisian constitution, it was proposed before the Tunisian Constituent Assembly to have Article One read that "Tunisia is an Arab, Islamic, and sovereign state." This formulation was rejected in favor of "Tunisia is a free, independent, and sovereign state. Its religion is Islamic and its language is Arabic." Clearly, the words adopted acknowledge a significant weakening of the Pan-Arabic ideal in Tunisia. Yet Habib Bourguiba, Jr., upon his recent arrival in Washington to take over the post of Chargé d'Affaires at the new Tunisian embassy, declared: "We are Arab in our feelings because we have the same history, language and religion."

It is just these "Arab feelings" that confront Morocco and Tunisia with two of their thorniest problems: Algeria and Israel. Responsible Moroccan and Tunisian leaders know that the task of establishing their nations on a firm foundation and coping with their social and economic problems is difficult enough without their becoming involved in situations outside the borders of their countries. Yet it is impossible for them, as Arab nationalists of some sort, not to get so involved.

Certainly this is true in regard to Algeria, with which Morocco and Tunisia have close historical and geographical bonds as well as a common hostility to France. Moroccans and Tunisians do not forget that their own struggles for independence were greatly helped by the embarrassment that the unrest in Algeria caused France. Indeed, the haste with which Morocco and Tunisia were granted their independence during the past year is in no small part attributable to the Algerian revolt: the French were eager to settle the situation in Morocco and Tunisia so as to have a free hand in Algeria. Now the Algerian rebels are asking for help in their turn—and getting it. The Moroccan and Tunisian governments have openly espoused the cause of the Algerian rebels and are presently trying with little success to prevent French troops from using their territory as a base of operations against the rebels.

As the fighting continues unabated in Algeria, the tension mounts in Morocco and Tunisia. Last August 13, the Moroccan nationalist organ *El Alam* carried an appeal for funds to aid the Algerian rebels, declaring: "Islam ordains us to deliver our Moslem brothers from foreign bondage. Since Algeria finds itself in dire need of material and moral aid, some loyal citizens have decided to come to the aid of the *Moujahiddines* [fighters of a *jihad*—holy war] of a brother country. Moroccans must understand that the freedom of Algeria is the freedom of Morocco. . . ."

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Though Morocco and Tunisia are less directly involved in the matter of Israel and Zionism because of their geographical remoteness, they are nonetheless emotionally involved. For tactical reasons, neither country has joined the Arab League yet, but sooner or later they will. Last April 22 Dr. Sadok Mokkadem, special envoy of the Tunisian government in the Middle East, declared in Damascus that "Tunisia, united with the other Arab countries by race, religion and language, will adhere to the Arab League and will participate in all activities undertaken by it on the international level in favor of Arabism and Islamism." He said further that "Tunisia will align itself on the side of the Arab countries in the Palestine question because Zionism represents one of the aspects of imperialism." In Morocco, though individual Jews are being permitted to emigrate, as well as those already in transit camps, organized emigration to Israel has been halted.

But even before the Algerian question exacerbated anti-French feeling, and the Israeli question anti-Jewish feeling, the position of these non-Moslem minorities was none too easy. The long years of French rule, and especially the vehemence with which the French "colonists" of Morocco and Tunisia opposed the nationalists, are not easily forgotten. As for the Jews, the inferior position assigned them in the traditional Islamic society that existed not so long ago in Tunisia and Morocco needs no repetition here.*

BECAUSE the Algerian and Israeli issues directly affect the rights and security of minorities in Morocco and Tunisia, they illuminate what is perhaps the profoundest political and spiritual conflict facing these countries—the contest between the Arab-Islamic ideals and those of social and political democracy. This is not to imply that an Arab-Islamic society is inherently and necessarily undemocratic. But traditional Islamic society, with such institutions as that of the *dimmi* ("protected ones"—persons with no rights of their own but living under the protection of the head of the state), inevitably runs into all sorts of difficulties in trying to transform itself into a modern liberal democracy.

It is a pity that Morocco and Tunisia have had to deal with the minorities question so early in their lives as independent states, without having the time to work it out in a calm and reasonable atmosphere. Nevertheless, both governments have indicated that they will not be stampeded into hasty action on this question. During the previously mentioned tour of Sultan Mohammed V, he and his son, Prince Moulay Hassan, met with representatives of the French and Jewish communities and went out of their way to promise them protection of their rights as Moroccans. Both in Tunisia and Morocco, despite the Islamic emphasis, the nationalist governments have made a point of having a Jewish minister in the government. Although André Barouch, the Jewish minister in Tunisia, has categorically disclaimed any role as a "representative" of the Jewish community, stating "I am not a deputy and minister as a representative of a religious community, but rather as a Tunisian citizen," his inclusion in the government was certainly intended to reassure the Jewish community and to demonstrate to the outer world that Tunisia was truly moving toward liberal democracy.

The Tunisian draft constitution promises in its preamble to create a "true democracy" and a "regime based upon the principles of the rights of man, freedom of the individual and of association, and equal rights and responsibilities for all citizens." Although Morocco has not yet drafted a constitution, the Istiqlal party at its convention last December adopted a resolution demanding that "equality of all Moroccan citizens without distinction of class and religion be solemnly proclaimed by and consecrated in the texts of the laws," and that "Moroccan Jews enjoy all political and civil rights; that

*See Hal Lehrman's articles in COMMENTARY, 'Morocco's Jews Enter the 20th Century" (August and September 1954), and "Morocco's Jews Between Islam and France" (November 1955).

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they have the right to vote or be represented in all Moroccan assemblies and to accede to offices of the Moroccan state."

The inclusion of Jews in the governments, the declaration of equal rights for all, and the invitation to the minorities to participate in the building of the new Moroccan and Tunisian nations are notable steps in the direction of democracy. But just as we have learned in the United States that a pronouncement by even the highest court in the land does not by itself abolish segregation, a long course of public re-education being needed, so in Morocco and Tunisia the formal declaration of equal rights needs the real assent of the mass of the people themselves. And then the crucial question arises: if Islam is the official state religion, will there be any chance for such re-education?

There is an additional obstacle in the way of the democratization of the position of minorities in Morocco and Tunisia: the policy of national integration pursued by leaders flushed with their new victory. Actually, the sense of national identity is a relatively new phenomenon in North Africa. To forge unified nations out of the separatist and particularist elements making up North African society requires the transcending of all the traditional subgroup affiliations (tribe, religious brotherhood, etc., etc.). But if—as is clearly the case in Morocco at least—integration is based on the spiritual tradition and ideal of Islam, how can the non-Moslem minorities make part of this unity? Even in Tunisia, where an important step in national integration has been taken on a basis not unfair to the non-Moslem minorities, the new constitution still proclaims Islam as the official state religion.

The history of nationalism throughout the world has shown that where there is militant nationalism, there is the danger too of what has been termed "integral" or "totalitarian" nationalism, a form of social organization quite incompatible with democracy. The true democratic ideal—of unity in diversity—is not easily achieved. Too extreme an approach by the Moslems of North Africa to the problem of national integration courts the danger of alienating the non-Moslem minorities, who will see it as a threat to their existence.

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THE CADILLAC OF BIBLES

A Story

LEON ROSENBLOOM

MAX BRODSKY reread the ad in the sales section of the Help Wanted column in the *Times*: Int yg mn, marr, exp not nec, avct, 117 wk, comm & bon, educ serv, Lo-2-3434. He would have preferred it to read sal, instead of comm & bonus; he made a note to call them if he didn't land the other job listed under Help Wanted. It appealed to him infinitely more: yg mn, sm coll, gd figs, marr, cln cut, 75 sal, gd fut.

Maybe except for the clean-cut part of it, Max felt that he had all of the qualifications. He suffered a tremor of anxiety when the mirror reflected back the paunchy contour of his torso and the unhealthy-looking overlay of jowl which was building up on his lower jaws. He was definitely not clean-cut, he thought bitterly, as he dragged the razor down his cheek.

There was a picture on the front page of the *Times* of General Walter "Beedle" Smith looking lean and fit as a whippet about to board a plane for the Far East to carry out a high-powered mission for the President. Unlike his own fleshy features, the General's jaws were ridged with knots of muscle; his neck was taut as a bowstring and he could not have weighed more than one hundred fifty-five pounds, even though he was a six-footer.

Max carried a deep grudge against his sloping, bearlike body and its easy sliding over into blubber when he strayed over eighteen hundred calories. He had a brief unhappy thought of dieting again, but it filled him with loathing.

THE bathroom door rattled impatiently. "How about it, hunh?" his wife's voice came over the running water.

"In a jiff, hon," he said, razoring quickly under his chin and over his adam's apple. Why is it she always catches me before I'm finished, he thought moodily.

The handle rattled more urgently. "Come on, awready," Pearl shouted.

Without bothering to wash off all the lather from his face Max dried himself with the towel on his hanger which was dirty and torn. He didn't feel really clean.

"Well?" Pearl demanded with rising anger in her voice. Max hastily tossed his beach robe over his still wet body and pushed out of the cell-like bathroom.

"It's all yours," he said sourly. She planted herself in front of him; Max turned his head to avoid the bad mouth odor which she always had in the morning.

"Gee, but ain't you the big philanthropist?" she said loudly.

"For heavensake, Pearl," Max hissed, "the kid's sleepin' yet."

She shouldered past him with a look on her face as after seeing a dead mangled animal in the street. "Drop dead!" She slammed the door; it sounded like a cannon shot.

Max waited for the water to flush before opening the door where their daughter Marsha slept. Although she lay with closed eyes, breathing serenely like an angel, he knew she was aware of him. He tiptoed over to her bed and kneeled by her side. Eyes still closed, she langorously reached out her arms around her father's neck.

"Hello, Princess," he whispered gruffly, leaning down to kiss her satiny cheek.

LEON ROSENBLOOM, who appears here in print for the first time, was born in New York in 1920 and educated at City College and New York University. He works as a teacher in the Division of Physically Handicapped Children of the New York City Board of Education.

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She smiled and clung for many long seconds. "Hello, my Prince," she lisped in sleepy coquettishness.

Max breathed deeply the sweetness of her sleep smell. "God, I love you, honey," Max said.

"The Queen is mad again, isn't she?" Marsha whispered, suppressing a desire to giggle crazily.

Max buried his head in the cascades of golden hair which covered the pillow. "Yes, Princess, she's mad all right," he sighed.

Marsha stroked his head and he quivered. "Did she make you go sleep in the living room last night?" she asked happily.

Max nodded. "Maybe she's not feeling so hot and I should take her to the doctor today," he said.

"Don't worry about her—she's always hanging around in his office," Marsha said drily. The water in the bathroom stopped running. "We'll talk later, sweetheart," she whispered, gently pushing Max away from her.

Max kissed her nose playfully and tiptoed out of the room.

"Get me a towel, will ya' Max!" Pearl shouted. "I'm dripping."

Max looked in the towel closet, which was empty. "There ain't any left, hon," he called back apologetically, knowing that they were running short on all their linens.

He heard her moving furiously around the bathroom. The hamper top slammed and the door flung open with a bang. "That's Max Brodsky all over," she yelled from the bedroom. "If he has a bathroom to his name then you can make sure there won't be a towel to dry with." Her mules clacked angrily on the asphalt tile floor. "If he had a towel to his name then he wouldn't have a bathroom," she snarled.

Max dressed quickly in the living room, sensing a tantrum. He knew that if he left right away Pearl might slap Marsha a little and pull her hair, but it would be over soon. He was always amazed at how the kid knew just how to handle her when she was riled up.

In a minute he was standing in the doorway. "I'll take breakfast out," he called.

"Go choke!" Pearl screamed. The words echoed down the staircase and up to the roof.

Max closed the door but he knew it was too late for some of the neighbors not to have heard. He knew Joe Kaplan, who lived on the floor under them, was standing on the stoop. He hated the sly look around his mouth when he had heard it all. His wife Sally was plump and easygoing, Joe was boss in the house. He often advised Max to use a firm hand with Pearl; but Max knew he was only putting on a show of being solicitous because he wanted to show what a he-man Joe Kaplan was.

Max waited in the hallway behind the closed hall door until Joe was gone. This morning in particular he could not have endured listening to his hollow bass voice and phony advice while all the while he was being laughed at for being a cowardly fool. Joe didn't know how lucky he was with a girl like Sally who was the exact antithesis of Pearl and her skinny fierceness. He smiled bitterly, recalling how once Joe had said he could tame Pearl's type in a week; he knew it to mean that Joe was saying that Max couldn't satisfy Pearl in bed but that Joe could.

Max got a seat on the train just before it crowded up and all the way down read the story on General Smith's mission. He studied the picture of him boarding the plane and admired the tremendously confident, alert bearing of the soldier-diplomat. I'd be all jittery and tense if I was going where he was, Max thought.

Max had to wait in the outer office for an hour before he got in to see the personnel man. He felt hungry and just a little grouchy when he was finally called in. The interview didn't go too well, he knew. The personnel man looked like a kid just out of college and he didn't seem impressed by Max's experience and two and a half years of college accountancy courses. He tries to wear his Howard suit like it was Brooks Brothers, Max thought, angry that

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some snotty college kid should be the one to decide if he was to get the job or not. Max was dismissed with a firm handshake and a flashing smile. He knew that the carefully groomed, athletic-looking fellow who went in after him would get the job.

What a faker, Max thought bitterly as he sat on the stool in Nedick's and had the fifteen-cent "breakfast special"; the way he said goodbye you'd think we were lodge brothers. He washed down the doughnut with the orange drink and felt better. It was a little early to call up the other ad, he thought, and browsed through several bookstores that had books with covers and titles that were pretty hot stuff. A boy with a leather jacket was absorbed in a juicy-looking book in the corner of the store. Max suddenly felt self-conscious about being in the place; he hurried out even though he would have liked to look over a few more of the snappy numbers.

Forty-second Street had a lazy drifting look. Most of the people were visitors from out of town. There were a few messenger boys walking fast. Here and there a figure shuffled by, panhandling or muttering to himself. Men on tall ladders were changing the marquee signs of the movie houses which were strung along west to Eighth Avenue.

Max turned off the street into a drugstore. He felt depressed by his own joblessness and the sight of vacationing people carefree with leisure and a bankroll to back it up. He always disliked being out of work—it scared him, and there was the Princess who depended on him. The voice at the other end of the wire heartily invited him to come right over for a talk. Max figured that they must have a big salesmen turnover.

The office was on the fourteenth floor of what was really the thirteenth floor of a big combination office-loft building. A receptionist at a desk asked him to sit down in a room lined with pictures of smiling salesmen posted in groups. Charts with names were also tacked on the wall; there were clusters of stars in gold and silver next to the names, although here and there were names with no stars.

"Come right in, Mr. Brodsky," a voice, the same as the one on the telephone, came from the inner office. Max walked into a cluttered cubicle across which a desk slanted diagonally. The man behind it reached over to shake hands without getting up and waved Max to a chair. "The name is Fliegel—Charlie Fliegel," he said, and his voice came out of him easy and fast.

He was a big, heavy man in his forties who had once been solidly muscled. Except for the cigar in his mouth which he maneuvered with a continual rolling motion, the rest of Mr. Fliegel looked soft now, and almost lazy, Max thought.

"You look like a bright young fella'. Family man?" Max nodded. "Good—all of our boys are family men. That's when you learn to appreciate the meaning of a buck, believe me," Mr. Fliegel laughed shortly. "I should know," he raised his eyebrows comically, "four of my own." He tossed a photograph across the desk. Max studied the picture of the Fliegel family sitting in a '54 Buick in front of a large comfortable-looking bungalow at the seashore. "Recognize Far Rockaway?" he asked.

Max smiled. "That's our little summer shack," Mr. Fliegel explained. Max had a moment of bitterness that the Princess would have to stay all summer at home, now that Pearl's Aunt Roz had sold her summer place. He could see that Fliegel's kids lacked for nothing.

"They're cute," Max said, handing back the picture. Mr. Fliegel replaced the picture in his wallet.

He studied Max intently for a moment. "Mr. Brodsky, I think you can see that I make a pretty good living at what I'm doing here," he shifted the cigar to the left side of his mouth. "If you would like the same thing for yourself, it's waiting for you—here and now. Six years ago I was sitting on the other side of this desk, too, and I talked to the man who is the president of this company today." He let it sink in. "There's good money for any man who is willing to work hard and follow our tested selling plan."

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Max listened intently. "Nobody who sells our product is kept on if he can't make more than a hundred a week," Mr. Fliegel said decisively. "After all, we can't afford to louse up customers. Our men make money, then Fliegel and the higher-ups make money. Fair enough?"

"Sure," Max murmured, fascinated by the dynamic movements of Mr. Fliegel's mouth. A natural salesman, Max thought. He leaned forward.

MR. FLIEGEL reached under his desk and with both hands brought out a massive black book bordered in gold and bound in excellent imitation plastic. "This is our product," he said, thumping the cover. "In the publishing line it's known as the Cadillac of the Bibles—the biggest, the best, the most expensive and fastest-selling Holy Book of them all."

Mr. Fliegel opened it and flipped the pages which were printed in large clear type. "First and foremost—pictures." Max saw a number of full-color reproductions, some of which were vaguely familiar from school and the museum: Ruth in the Desert, Susannah and the Elders—this one had on her clothes, though—and Joseph in the Well. "What would Life mag be without pictures? I'll tell you—a flop!" he chuckled vigorously.

With a kind of funny shock Max noticed abruptly a Crucifixion picture and others of a similar kind. "Explanations of all religious terms and ceremonies in everyday, understandable language written by Monsignor O'Connell, head of a well-known school of divinity—" Mr. Fliegel paused for a moment to flick the ash from his cigar—"Funny what people don't know about their own religion these days."

Max was willing to admit to that; he knew little enough about his own religion except for a few big holidays when the family got all dressed up and he ducked into the synagogue for a few minutes. The Princess liked the part of dressing up the best.

"There's a special section for the daily prayers," Mr. Fliegel continued. "Pray together—stay together, as the saying goes. That's what families need these days," he observed seriously.

Max tried to picture him and Pearl and the Princess all praying together. God, how Pearl would give it to him, even if he suggested it to her! Why is she always so angry? he wondered.

"Then there's a special section we call the Family Diary. There's room to record marriages, births, communions, and that sort of thing for six generations. You see, Brodsky, our product is designed to be passed down the line from father to son; a man likes to leave his family a Cadillac, not a Chevvy, so to speak. Psychology," he tapped his head significantly and smiled so that his eyes shone with shrewdness.

Max grinned broadly. Mr. Fliegel turned the pages more rapidly. "Pictures of all the Popes and prominent church leaders—" there was a picture of Cardinal Spellman and Bishop Sheen, both in their rich ecclesiastical robes, and others he did not know. "Naturally our Protestant edition doesn't have this section," and Mr. Fliegel made a mock horror gesture which Max found very comical.

"We sell both Bibles, and you can show this version to any customer—only make sure if it's a Protestant they don't see the pictures of the Pope. Just tell them they'll get the edition with Martin Luther." Mr. Fliegel closed the book and carefully placed it on a lectern next to his desk right side up. Max saw that the front cover had a large gold cross. He had never even held a Gentile Bible in his hands before and he had a mildly apprehensive feeling about the whole deal. It wasn't that he was religious or anything near it, but—he didn't know exactly what it was yet that made him hesitate. It was almost as though he were being asked to wear a cross around his neck or to pray in a church—he didn't know at the moment, and he waited for Mr. Fliegel to continue.

Mr. Fliegel was judiciously rolling his cigar from side to side. Finally he placed it on a small metal tray and leaned forward. "Brodsky," he began confidentially, "let's face it. We're both from the same tribe and I know what you're thinking. When I was

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sitting where you are now, talking to the sales manager of this outfit, I had the same question to ask: how does it look for a Jew to sell the *goyishe* book? The man who is today the president of this company gave me this answer, and it was as good seven years ago as it still is today: Just because you're a Jew you'll sell more books! Why? Because to the person who buys, it will be a secret triumph that a Jew brought the book to him. Get the psychology behind it? A Jew, and I mean Jesus Christ himself, brought them their religion; now another Jew, Max Brodsky, is bringing them their holy book. That's why 60 per cent of our boys are from the same tribe as Fliegel and Brodsky." Mr. Fliegel took a deep breath and leaned back in his chair.

"That's a smart angle," Max nodded. No wonder the man who figured that one is the president of the company today, he thought.

Mr. Fliegel lit up the cold cigar butt. "See this guy?" he asked, snatching a picture off the wall and pointing to a very short, youngish-looking man standing in front of a group of twelve smiling salesmen holding the company's product in their hands. "That's our star, Al Mishkin. Little guy, nothing much to look at—but he brings home three hundred a week, Brodsky. Two years ago he was sitting where you are right now; today he's the sales manager for Queens and Nassau. Next Saturday the whole staff is going over to Al's beautiful Forest Hills apartment on the occasion of his son's Bar Mitzvah. When we say advancement, we mean it! What has Al got that you haven't got? Nothing—and I mean nothing. He's no genius, but he knows one thing—to make a buck you've got to hustle—and that boy hustles, believe me, Brodsky, he hustles." Mr. Fliegel took one more admiring look at Al Mishkin before he replaced the photograph on the wall.

"Every man in Al's crew averages one-fifty per week. They got to—or else he doesn't want them. Only our top crew can work for Al," Mr. Fliegel said. "We start you out in your own borough first. In the Bronx our sales manager is Mike Vanetta. Mike used to be a Golden Gloves champ and he's one of our best boys—averages two-fifty, maybe a little more each week," and he pointed to a picture of a squat, powerfully built man with a boyish grin heading up a crew of self-consciously smiling salesmen.

BRIEFLY, Mr. Fliegel outlined the commission arrangements. "Well, how about it, Max? Did I sell you on this yet? I shouldn't have to—this deal sells itself," Mr. Fliegel said, wrinkling up his eyes against the blue smoke from his cigar.

"Sounds pretty good to me, Mr. Fliegel," Max said. "I'd like a crack at it." Even if he was able to make seventy or eighty a week at first, it would be a godsend, Max thought. Besides, as his father used to say, in America it doesn't matter who you are as much as what you are; and if the A & P could sell *yahrzeit licht* then why couldn't he sell Bibles?

"You won't regret it, Brodsky," Mr. Fliegel said. "This is our kit," and he showed Max a small leather briefcase in which the Bible fitted compactly and with a neat pocket on the outside for sales forms. "We ask for a ten-dollar deposit when we give you this kit, and it's returnable on demand."

Max flushed slightly. "If you're a little short, I'll take five. I know an honest face when I see one, Max," Mr. Fliegel said. Max handed him a five-dollar bill and Mr. Fliegel gave him the kit, which was surprisingly heavy for its size. Mr. Fliegel chuckled. "That's a lot of Bible you're carrying there, boy." He quickly wrote out some directions on a piece of memo paper and handed it to Max. "I wrote the time and place where you'll meet Mike tomorrow morning. He'll be expecting you. Read these instructions," he handed Max a small stapled pamphlet. "Mike will take you out with him personally tomorrow. In three hours you'll learn the whole selling gimmick, then you're on your own. The first week we don't expect any miracles; after that, we should all make money."

Max got up slowly from his chair and Mr. Fliegel walked with him to the door with his arm around Max's shoulder. "Re-

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member this—I'm an old hand at the selling game. I've pushed everything from pots and pans to baby pictures. One year I even sold farm equipment in Oklahoma; I know this game inside out. I'm set now, been set for six years and I'm going higher all the time, believe me. I don't care what you may personally think about religion. One thing I know—it's here to stay and there's a good dollar to be made in it. It's clean, honest work and it pays." He opened the door and they shook hands.

"I'll be in touch with you, Max," he said, and waved to a man sitting in the waiting room to come inside. He shook hands with Mr. Fliegel and they went into his office.

The receptionist smiled at Max. She was a slender, pretty girl just out of high school. Her hair was the same color as Marsha's and it framed her face like a halo, Max thought. Pearl had looked a little like that when they were married; he wondered why she had such a vicious temper now. The girl brushed her hair back with an incredibly graceful movement which revealed the ivory smooth whiteness of her gently rounded arms. Max would have let the elevator go by to be able to look at her a little longer if she hadn't suddenly gotten up and gone inside. Regretfully, he went down, but he couldn't get rid of the queer intoxicating sensation which lingered with him. He decided to wait around the lobby to catch another look at her when she went to lunch.

Max walked up and down the lobby reading the names of the firms in the directory and looking over magazine covers at the cigar stand. He was ready to go after twenty minutes, when an elevator emptied out and she came by with Mr. Fliegel who held her arm and guided her through the crowds. Max ducked to the side and they passed within two feet of him. He followed them halfway down the street when they turned off into a Schrafft's. Watching through the window he saw a hostess show them to a booth against the wall. Mr. Fliegel took her hand; she laughed and didn't seem to mind. Mr. Fliegel's mouth was working animatedly on a fresh cigar. She lit it for him.

Max felt oddly limp and dejected. He hurried away to the corner and turned south walking fast all the way down Lexington Avenue until he came to Twenty-third Street. The City College School of Business was on the southeast corner, looking like another office building. He went into the evening session office and asked the clerk if she would check his record card. Several minutes later she returned with the card and counted the credits he had already completed.

"You have seventy-one credits now, Mr. Brodsky, which leaves us with fifty-seven for the required one hundred and twenty-eight," she said briskly. Max liked her crisply businesslike manner. "You know that your GI benefits have expired. You'll have to pay $7.50 per credit now," she added, her forehead knitted with concern.

He stared at the entries and felt self-conscious at the number of red ones that indicated courses which were incomplete or failed. Max would have liked to explain the reasons for the red marks, but he was sure the clerk didn't really care. He asked for a fall catalogue, which she promptly handed him. "Thanks, miss," he said gratefully and left.

The lobby was surprisingly crowded for the summer session. Max had a feeling of regret that he was out of the academic life, which he had rather enjoyed until Pearl had gotten fed up with working while he was going for his degree after the war. He heard his name being called by the girl from the evening session office. "Mr. Brodsky, your briefcase."

She was laughing and a little breathless, and held the kit in her hands like an offering. He took it from her feeling grateful and humble before her youthful glow. He wanted to kiss her fingers. "Thanks, miss—thanks awfully," he stuttered.

"That's okay, sir," she laughed showing beautiful even teeth.

She's so lovely, Max thought desperately, as she turned to go back. "Wait, miss," he called, running a few steps after her. She turned around. "Can I take you to lunch?"

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and he knew from his own voice that he was pleading.

She stared at him for a moment, wrinkling her nose in a painfully curious gesture which Max knew meant, No! not on your life!

"No, thanks. I've an appointment," she said and disappeared into the office. Max went slowly upstairs to the reading room and stared at a copy of *Life* for twenty minutes. He didn't feel much like reading or sitting still in the nearly deserted library. He walked over to the Twenty-third Street subway and took the uptown train. A bunch of summer school girls were fooling around to attract the attention of some boys across the aisle. Max grinned at their gawky self-conscious horseplay. It seemed so recent that he had been in high school without a load on his shoulders all the time. The boys were already talking with the girls when he got off at Simpson Street.

Before going up he stopped off at the tailor's and took out his summer suit and a skirt that Pearl had forgotten to pick up. Going down the block he remembered when they were first married how he used to take off from work in the afternoon to surprise Pearl and make love to her. It was fun until Marsha was born and Pearl had gotten sick for a while after the weaning. The war came soon after. Things were different when he was discharged. Pearl was nice for a while, but then she started acting fed up and disgusted and it was all arguments now. He hoped she was out shopping or sitting in the square with the women.

MARSHA was in the kitchen mixing herself a strawberry Kool-Aid. "Daddy!" she cried, clamping her arms around his neck to hang on to him.

He kissed her and squeezed tight. "Hello, Princess," he said gratefully. "Where's Ma?"

"Doctor Schneidermann, where else?" she said contemptuously. "My condition, my condition, that's all I hear from her. I'll bet she lives in that doctor's office. God should only help me not to be like her when I grow up and have a family!" she made a face.

Max felt he would die looking at her expression. He wanted to laugh out loud and roll around on the floor, the kid was so comical. "You mustn't talk about your mother that way, Princess," he said gravely, hugging her for sheer delight.

What a treasure, he thought, what a godsend. The door to the apartment opened and slammed shut. Pearl came into the kitchen; she was wearing her best dress, Max noticed, which she always did whenever she went to Dr. Schneidermann.

"Well, what a gay party you two love birds are having," she said, dumping a grocery bag on the table.

"Have a cold drink, hon," Max offered, adding ice cubes to the pitcher.

She made a face. "That slop! I'd rather die first." She opened the tap and let the water run. "I got good news for you," she said.

From the bitter smile on her face Max knew it wasn't going to be good. "Go play inside, Princess," he told Marsha.

With her back still turned to him Pearl said, "Dr. Schneidermann says I need injections for my nerves—fifty dollars for the whole series." She drank the water slowly.

Max exhaled through his mouth making a soft whistling note. "That's a lot of dough, hon? What's wrong with your nerves?" he asked.

"What's wrong with my nerves?" she mimicked, putting down the glass. She whirled around just when he figured she would, baring her teeth in a grimace of hatred. "What's wrong?" she laughed shrilly. "Everything is wrong! This life! That brat! And you, most of all!"

Max avoided looking at her. "Right now fifty bucks is a lot of money," he repeated.

"So what am I supposed to do? Go to a charity clinic?" Pearl shouted.

Max shrugged. "We pay taxes—it's not so terrible—" he muttered and stopped because of the look she gave him.

Marsha came into the kitchen hauling the Bible in her arms. "What's this, Dad?" she asked, ignoring her mother.

"Give it to me, Princess," Max said sharply, taking it from her, "it's for business."

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The large gold cross on the cover glinted brightly in the afternoon sun. "Business?" Pearl asked with a puzzled frown. "Holy Bible," she read over his shoulder.

Max stared down at the floor. "Can I read it, Dad?" Marsha asked in a wheedling voice.

Pearl took her by the shoulder and pushed her out of the kitchen. "Don't be such a noseybody!" she called after her. "What business?" she demanded of Max after Marsha ran into the bedroom.

"Part-time selling proposition," Max said matter-of-factly.

"This—you're selling!" Pearl pointed to the book.

Max nodded. "It pays good commissions," he said. "I took my suit out of the cleaner, and also your skirt."

Pearl looked at him with an incredulous expression. *"Moishe Kapoyre,"* she said, "just like our whole life together, *Moishe Kapoyre.*"

Max fidgeted with the half-empty glass of Kool-Aid. "There are lots of Jewish fellas in this organization who are making a good dollar," Max said. "It's not a crime in America. Your mother buys *yahrzeit licht* in the A & P, doesn't she?" he asked belligerently.

"O, you fool, you damned fool!" she said between clenched teeth. "You can't understand the difference?"

"We had a regular Jewish wedding, with a rabbi and everything," Max said, "and an Italian boy, Julie de Marco, was the singer. Nobody cared then and nobody cares now if a Jew sells Gentile Bibles or a Gentile sells our Bibles. It makes no difference in America," Max concluded. He filled his glass with more Kool-Aid and sipped it.

"Let them sell their own Bibles," she demanded.

Max pounded the table with the flat of his hand. "Mr. Charlie Fliegel and Mr. Al Mishkin are good for three hundred a week at this game and they're Jews just as good as we are, and maybe even better," he said.

"Max," she said, choosing her words slowly, "you can take your Mr. Charlie Fliegel and your Mr. Al Mishkin and drop dead with them together." Pearl began putting a cheese sandwich together.

Max stared thoughtfully at the pitcher. "Pearl, I wish you'd stop using such contemptible expressions," he said. "Think of the child's sake, if not mine."

"You make me," she said. "I was a refined girl when I married you, but all through the years I've put up with too much from you. Those crazy jobs you're always taking and then losing; your courses which you'll never finish; your plans which an idiot wouldn't even think of. No wonder I use such expressions," she wept.

Marsha slid silently into the kitchen next to Max and slipped on to his lap. She stared at Pearl with a look of absolute hatred.

"You little sneak," Pearl yelled, "get out of here when we're talking!" She rushed at Marsha with her arms held high like a hawk's talons. Max quickly interposed himself between them and held Pearl off with his free arm as Marsha scooted out of the house with a yell of terror. Pearl began to claw at his shoulders and face. Still keeping her at arm's length he reached for the glass of Kool-Aid and tossed it in her face.

Pearl gasped as the drink splashed on her face and neck and ran down her bosom in a jagged pink line. Spatters of pink showed on the shoulder and waist; a slow trickle began moving down the back of the dress. She ran into the bathroom turning front and back to the mirror to see the damage. Slowly she pulled it off and washed the sticky sweet fluid from her face and body where it had soaked through the dress.

In the kitchen Max was wiping the floor with a rag, crouched over on his knees. Pearl stepped around him and took the pitcher from the table.

"What are you doing, Pearl?" he called. She calmly walked with it into the living room.

There was a soft thud when Max jumped to his feet. In the living room his suit was on the floor and Pearl was standing over it, emptying the pitcher with great deliberation so that the whole suit would be soaked from

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top to bottom. Then she pushed it into a heap and stamped up and down on it with her high-heeled shoes.

She flung the pitcher over his head. It smashed against the wall. The blue glass scattered around the room in jagged glistening splinters. "Now, go sell your Bibles!" she screamed and disappeared into the bedroom. Max kneeled over the sopping clothes and separated the pants from the jacket. They weren't torn. It was a fifty-fifty chance that the stains would come out at the cleaner's.

Max went into the kitchen for a broom and a dustpan. He had accumulated a small mound of broken glass when Pearl opened the bedroom door. She wore a green party dress and a chic beaded hat; a small suitcase was in her hand. "This is it, Max." She spoke quietly. Max turned away and pushed the glass into the dustpan. "I can't take it any longer—I'm going to Mama's. Bring Marsha tomorrow or Sunday."

Max returned to the kitchen, and emptied the glass into the garbage pail. The door to the apartment slammed shut. He heard Pearl's high heels clicking down the stairs until she was in the street.

He watched from the window, following Pearl's nervous stride down the block until she disappeared from view in front of the Elevated. He went into the kitchen again and ate the sandwich which Pearl had made for herself and put up water for instant coffee. He figured that she'd be gone a week or two the most, and maybe by then he'd have another job. He drank the coffee black with a chocolate marshmallow cracker. In the next few weeks he'd find himself and maybe they'd be able to get along like in the old days.

THE kit had fallen on the floor under the table. Max dusted it off and replaced the Bible inside, zipping it closed. He felt vaguely relieved that he wasn't going to push the Gentile Bible tomorrow. When he was downtown he'd get his deposit back from Fliegel and kiss the whole deal goodbye. How could Al Mishkin look the rabbi in the face when his son was being Bar Mitzvah, he wondered. Not that it's a crime or anything like that, but—he couldn't quite give words to the feelings he had about it now. With all her evil temper and unpredictable actions, there was a vein of primal loyalty in Pearl which he respected.

He hung up the suit to dry in the bathroom. His other suit was clean enough to go downtown in. In the bathroom Max looked at himself in the mirror and resolved to try the seven-day wonder diet from the magazine. As he put the kit in the closet he said aloud, "Only in America," and grinned with a mixture of heartache and self-detestation. It was his father's favorite expression.

Marsha came in and looked into her mother's bedroom. "She's gone to Granma's?" she asked, straightening out the bedspread.

"Yea, Princess, the Queen's walked out on us again," he said ruefully.

She kissed his cheek and smiled. "We'll have a wonderful time now," she said. "I'll make the supper and do the shopping." Marsha ran into the kitchen and opened the icebox.

"You'll have to go over to Granma's tomorrow or Sunday, Princess," he said apologetically.

She made a face. "I'd rather stay with you, Daddy."

Max hugged her, feeling all choked up for the love in him. "We'll see when the time comes, Princess," he said. "Suppose us two go to Orchard Beach Saturday and we'll eat lunch in the outdoor cafeteria after swimming and at night we'll go to a movie in the Loew's Paradise."

"Gee, I feel like a real Princess," Marsha clapped her hands.

Max smiled. "My Princess is real, all right. I wouldn't swap her for anyone," he said.

"I love you, Daddy," she cried and kissed him again. "I need money for eggs and butter," she said.

Max gave her a dollar and she folded it into her pocket. As she was about to leave she turned around. "Dad, are you really going to sell that kind of a Bible?" she asked Max anxiously.

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"No, Princess, I changed my mind," he said.

"That's good," she smiled widely. "You know, Daddy, sometimes you really have very funny ideas," she said and went out.

Downstairs Sylvia Kaplan was playing with her doll and carriage in the shade of the alleyway. "Hello, Marsha," she said, holding up her girl doll which she had just finished washing.

"Hello, Syl," Marsha said. "Walk me to the store? I'm shopping."

Sylvia replaced the doll and covered it with the embroidered pink blanket. She wheeled the carriage into the street and they walked slowly down to the corner.

Max watched them from the window and smiled tenderly at the busy way they talked with their faces pressed close. What a kid, he thought. He dialed the number of Mr. Fliegel's office to say he would not go out with Mike Vanetta's crew tomorrow morning.

"Lend me your ring?" Marsha wheedled.

"Why?" Sylvia asked, rocking the carriage as she walked.

"Because I'm the wife now," Marsha said.

"Gee, but you're lucky. My mother never walks out on us," she said. Sylvia unscrewed the plain brass band from her pinky and handed it to Marsha.

"My fingers are skinnier than yours," Marsha said, slipping it on her second finger of the left hand. "Maybe she'll be gone two weeks and I'll be able to stay here alone with Max."

Sylvia frowned. "Maybe you'll have to go to Granma, though."

They entered the cool dark interior of the grocery store. "I want a dozen best large eggs and a quarter pound sweet butter," Marsha told the clerk.

"Bossy, just like your mother," the clerk said grumpily and went to fill the order while Marsha turned her hand to view the ring from all angles.

MR. MAMMON

DAVID IGNATOW

It was no use their pleading with me
to whom they came for pay Fridays.
I demanded loyalty, efficiency,
promptness and no problem about it.
I would raise my voice too in anger
or sarcasm and I would see white
come into their faces. At these
moments
one would walk out the door
and not return. I'd have to mail
the final check. The others
would go about their work dazed-looking.
I'd be sorry but I'd be practical too,
entering my office and shutting the door
behind me. I was no dream
of human perfection, nor did I intend
that in business. Miserable
as they were the most part of the week,
holidays would have them pray
for perfect mercy, which left me
to feel an outsider, and I did not pray,
standing in Our Lord's presence for
judgment,
as I felt myself each day of the week.

David Ignatow's *The Gentle Weightlifter*, a collection of verse, was recently published by the Morris Gallery. He has been a frequent contributor to the pages of Commentary.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

DEBATE AT BARCELONA: HAS THE MESSIAH COME?

Rabbi Moses ben Nachman vs. Fra Paulo Christiani

PUBLIC debates on religion between Jews and Christians were a frequent occurrence in Europe during the Middle Ages, when the representative of the Church, who was most often a converted Jew, sought to triumph over his reluctant Jewish antagonist by demonstrating out of Jewish texts themselves that Christianity was the "fulfillment" of Judaism.

Such a debate was held in July and August of 1263 in Barcelona at the court of King Jayme I of Aragon. The subject was the Messiah: whether he had come or not, whether he was divine or not. The disputants were Rabbi Moses ben Nachman (Ramban) of Gerona, the most famous rabbi in Spain, and Fra Paulo Christiani, a converted Jew employed by the Dominicans as missionary to the Jews.

Raymond of Pennaforte, the king's confessor, who figures in the debate at several points, had been Master General of the Dominican Order, and the historian Graetz believes that the king commanded the disputation at his urging, in the belief that through it Nachman might be converted and with him the whole of Spanish Jewry.

Shortly after the debate had been concluded, with both Jews and Dominicans claiming the victory, Nachman published an account of the proceedings. For this he was banished for two years and his pamphlet burned. Later, at the insistence of Pope Clement IV, this sentence was altered to perpetual banishment. Nachman then went to Palestine, where he lived out his days.

These excerpts from the debate are from Nachman's account, as translated from the text edited by Moses Steinschneider, and included in *Jewish Religious Polemic,* by O. S. Rankin (1956). They are reprinted by permission of the Edinburgh University Press.—ED.

OUR lord the king had commanded me to debate with Fra Paulo in his majesty's palace, in the presence of himself and his council, in Barcelona. To this command I replied that I would accede if I were granted freedom of speech, whereby I craved both the permission of the king and of Fra Raymond of Pennaforte and his associates who were present. Fra Raymond of Pennaforte replied that this I could have so long as I did not speak disrespectfully. . . .

Then Fra Paulo began by saying that he would prove from our Talmud that the Messiah of whom the prophets had witnessed had already come. I replied to that, that before we argued on that, I would like him to show and tell me how this could possibly be true. . . . Did he wish to say that the scholars who appear in the Talmud believed concerning Jesus that he was the Messiah, and that they believed that he was completely man and truly God in accordance with the Christian conceptions of him? Was it not indeed a known fact that Jesus existed in the days of the Second Temple, being born and put to death before the destruction of that Temple? But the scholars of the Talmud were later than this destruction. . . . Now, if these scholars had believed in the Messiahship of Jesus and that he was genuine and his religious belief true; and if they wrote those things which Fra Paulo affirms he is going to prove that they wrote; then how was it that they continued to hold by the Jewish faith and their original religious usage? For they were Jews and continued to abide in the religion of the Jews all their days. They died as Jews, they and their children, and their disciples who heard all the words they uttered. Why did they not apostatize and turn to the religion of Jesus as has done Fra Paulo who understands from

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their sayings that the Christian faith is the true faith? . . .

HERE Fra Paulo . . . brought forward that Haggadic story, contained in the Midrash to the Book of Lamentations, about the man who was ploughing when his cow began lowing. An Arab was passing by and said to the man: "O Jew, O Jew, untie your cow, untie your plough, untie your coulter, for the Temple has been destroyed." The man untied his cow, his plough, and his coulter. The cow lowed a second time. The Arab said to the man: "Tie your cow, tie your plough, tie your coulter, for your Messiah has been born."

To this I answered: "I do not give any credence at all to this Haggadah but it provides proof of my argument." At this the fellow shouted: "See how the writings of his fellow-Jews are denied by him!" I replied: "I certainly do not believe that the Messiah was born on the day of the destruction of the Temple and as for this Haggadah, either it is not true or it has another interpretation of the sort called the mystical explanations of the wise. But I shall accept the story's plain literal statement, which you have put forward, since it furnishes me with support. Observe then that the story says that at the time of the destruction of the Temple, after it had been destroyed, on that very day, the Messiah was born. If this be so, then Jesus is not the Messiah as you affirm that he is. For he was born and was put to death before the destruction of the Temple took place, his birth being nearly two hundred years before that event according to the true chronology and seventy-three years previous to that event according to your reckonings." At these words of mine my opponent was reduced to silence. . . .

Fra Paulo then said to me: "Then you do believe that the Messiah has come?" I replied: "No, but I believe and am convinced that he has not come and there never has been anyone who has said concerning himself that he was Messiah—nor will there ever be such who will say so [*viz.*, concerning themselves]—except Jesus. And it is impossible for me to believe in the Messiahship of Jesus, because the prophet says of the Messiah that 'he shall have dominion from sea to sea and from the River until the ends of the earth.' Jesus, on the other hand, never had dominion, but in his lifetime he was pursued by his enemies and hid himself from them, falling finally into their power whence he was not able to liberate himself. How then could he save all Israel? Moreover, after his death dominion was not his. For in regard to the Empire of Rome, he had no part in the growth of that. Since, before men believed in him the city of Rome ruled over most of the world and after faith in him had spread, Rome lost many lands over which it once held sovereign power. And now the followers of Mohammed possess a larger empire than Rome has. In like manner the prophet Jeremiah says that in the Messianic age 'they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me,' while in Isaiah it is written, that 'the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.' Moreover the latter prophet states that, in this time, 'they shall beat their swords into ploughshares . . . nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.' But since the days of Jesus up to the present the whole world has been full of violence and rapine, the Christians more than other peoples being shedders of blood and revealers likewise of indecencies. And how hard it would be for you, my lord the king, and for those knights of yours, if they should learn war no more!" . . . At this juncture my opponent called out: "Such is always his method—to make a long speech when I have a question to put to him." . . .

OUR lord the king had arranged that on the next Thursday the debate should be held in his palace and had commanded that it be in private. So we had our session in the fore-hall of the palace, Fra Paulo beginning with an airy speech in which there was no substance at all. After this he declared: "I bring the testimony of a great Jewish scholar named Master Moses of Egypt [Maimonides] the like of whom has not been in Jewry for the last four hundred years. This scholar says that the Messiah will die and his son and son's son rule in succession. Thus he does not say, as you have said, that the Messiah is not mortal like other men are." Then Fra Paulo asked for the Book of Judges [by Maimonides]. . . .

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The book which Fra Paulo had asked for was now brought, and he sought for what he wanted in it and could not find it. So I received the book from his hands, and, calling for attention to the statements of the work which he had introduced into the discussion, read aloud from the beginning of the chapter where it is said that the king Messiah is in the future to be designated for Israel and that he will build the Temple and gather together Israel's dispersed. At these words of Maimonides, Fra Arnol of Segura exclaimed: "He is speaking lies." To which I replied: "Up till now he has been a 'great scholar' that has 'none like him' and now he is a liar!" But the king rebuked Fra Arnol, observing that it was not seemly to offer insults to the learned. . . .

WHEN they came to the synagogue on the following Sabbath I addressed our lord the king in words that were worthy of the occasion and of his office. When he expounded earnestly to the effect that Jesus was the Messiah, I rose up and said: "The words of our lord the king in my eyes are noble words, exalted and to be held in honor since they proceed from the mouth of a nobleman highly esteemed and honored, the like of whom is not in our time, but I do not appraise them as the truth in as much as I have proofs and arguments clear as sunlight that the truth does not correspond with his words. . . ."

After I had spoken thus Fra Raymond of Pennaforte rose up and gave a discourse on the subject of the Trinity and asserted that the Trinity was wisdom and will and power. . . . To which I replied that I acknowledged that the deity was wise and not foolish, and will without passibility and powerful and not weak, but that the expression *Trinity* was entirely misleading. For wisdom in the Creator is not an unessential quality but He and His wisdom are one and He and His will are one and He and His power are one—and, if this be so, the wisdom and the will and the power are one whole. And even if these were unessential qualities of God, the thing which is the Godhead is not three but is one, bearing three unessential qualities.

Our lord the king here spoke, drawing an analogy which they who err had taught him. He said that in wine there are three things, color and taste and fragrance, and that these constitute one thing. . . . But this is entirely erroneous, since the redness and the taste and the fragrance in wine are three distinct things each of which might be present without the others. For there are red and white and other colors of wine. The same holds true in regard to taste and fragrance. Moreover the redness is not the wine, nor is the taste the wine, nor is the fragrance the wine. But the essence of the wine is the thing which fills the whole, and is a body which bears three distinct accidents; a body in which there is no unity. And if (in regard to the deity) we should proceed on this false analogy to calculate as has been done we would be compelled to affirm a quaternity. For the thing which constitutes deity together with his wisdom and his will and his power when counted up is four. Further, you could have a fivefold deity, since God is a living being and just as wisdom is in Him so is life; in which case his definition would be: a living being, wise, willing, powerful, and having the essence of Godhead. All of which comes to five. But this whole mode of thought is manifestly wrong.

THEN Fra Paulo stood up and said that he believed in the perfect unity of the Deity but that nevertheless there was in that unity a Trinity, and this was a doctrine very profound for neither the angels nor the princes of the upper regions could comprehend it. My answer to this was: "It is clear that no person believes what he does not know. Hence it is that the angels do not believe in a Trinity." The associates of Fra Paulo made him remain silent. Our lord the king rose up and he and those with him descended from the place where the prayer-desk was, each going their several ways. On the morrow I had audience of our lord the king whose words to me were: "Return to your city in safety and in peace." Then he gave me three hundred *dinars* and I took my leave of him with much affection. May God make him worthy of the life of the world to come. Amen.

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ON THE HORIZON

A TALK WITH ROBERT GRAVES

English Poet in Majorca

ARNOLD SHERMAN

I OFTEN saw a towering giant of a man, beyond middle age and usually dressed in an over-sized sweater and dungarees, on the beach near our home on Majorca. Sometimes he was alone, but usually he was accompanied by a slender, studious-looking woman and a blond, blue-eyed boy of two. Although our home was not inaccessible, it was off the beaten track for tourists and so the presence of strangers, and strangers who were undoubtedly foreigners, aroused our curiosity. I saw the "giant" as a retired British colonel, while my wife insisted he was a painter. Finally, we asked a Majorcan native who lived nearby if he knew who the stranger was.

"He is supposed to be an extraordinary writer," we were told, "a very great man who has lived almost all his life here."

"Do you know his name?" I asked, already half suspecting the answer.

"Roberto Graves. Have you heard of him?"

A week later, while I was admiring the pattern the tides had engraved on the beach, Graves appeared from behind a sand dune and, raising his huge arms, dove into the Mediterranean.

When he returned, dripping, to the beach, I approached him. "Is the water cold?" I asked meekly.

"You're an American," he retorted accusingly, not bothering to answer me.

He dried himself by vigorously flapping his hands in the air. "And a writer?"

I blushed and he smiled triumphantly. "I knew it," he said. "I can always spot Americans and I can always spot a writer and the easiest creature in the world to detect is an American writer. They are sometimes impossible people."

Impossible or not, Graves invited me to his home in Palma, Majorca's capital.

Graves, with his wife and the three youngest of his eight children, lived on two floors in an ancient but well-preserved part of the city, where he stays for the three months of the Majorcan winter. The rest of the year he lives in Deya, a remote village in the northeast of the island.

When I arrived at his house Graves greeted me warmly and led me into his study. Piles of books several feet high stood everywhere in the huge room. Socks, underwear, shoelaces, broken pencils, and sea shells were strewn in every direction. A half dozen manuscripts lay on a desk and hundreds of magazines were scattered over the floor. The only thing that lent a semblance of order to the place was a long bookcase in the rear that held copies of all of Graves's books—over ninety volumes of poetry, criticism, essays, historical novels, and translations from the Greek, Latin, Spanish, and German. Their subjects ranged from the life

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THE English poet Robert Graves, described in this interview, is also a translator, critic, and novelist, and has more books and writing to his credit than one can begin to list. Suffice it to say here that his *Nazarene Gospel Restored* (done with Joshua Podro) was reviewed in our pages in November 1955, and he himself contributed an essay on Negro folklore, " 'Culture Creep,' " to our June 1956 issue. ARNOLD SHERMAN is a free-lance writer living in New York. He was born in Brooklyn in 1932 and educated at Brooklyn College and LaSalle University. This is his first appearance in COMMENTARY.

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of Jesus to the reign of Claudius, through the Dark Ages and the Renaissance, to descriptions of the island that has been the writer's home for nearly half his life.

"You probably want to know," Graves began, "why I came to Majorca in the first place. Admittedly, this is a rather isolated place for a man whose work so often depends upon painstaking research. There are no libraries here. The island, in terms of certain luxuries, is primitive, and except for a short interlude during which George Sand and Frederick Chopin vacationed here one winter, the island has no real tradition of art. Yet I find it one of the most serene and tranquil spots in the world. There are parts of this island that contain all the beauty that I was accustomed to in Wales as a child, less the bitter climate and provincialism of the latter. The people of Majorca are the most gentle group of individuals in the world. They combine a sense of natural modesty, pride, and honesty in all their dealings. I brought up eight children here and have written over ninety books and hundreds upon hundreds of articles from my home in Deya and I've never regretted a moment spent here."

His eye turned to two manuscripts lying on the desk before him. "These are two translations that I'm currently working on. They're rather obscure Latin treatises. I try to keep in trim by translating a certain number of books each year. I'm also writing a novel about an Englishman named William Palmer who was hanged in June 1856. I find it very easy to do because the Victorian era was so rich and dirty."

A maid entered and poured the first cup of English tea I had tasted in Spain. "I have a rather difficult question to ask you," I said. "You've practiced nearly every conceivable form of writing, and according to the critics you have more or less succeeded in all of them. But which do you yourself prefer?"

Graves's pale blue eyes began to sparkle. He rose and said emphatically, "I enjoy translating, but of course I am not primarily a translator. By the same token I write novels, but I do that mostly for money. In fact all but one thing I do, I do for fun, exercise, or money. The one exception is poetry. All that matters in all my writing has been poetry. It is the only thing that should matter to a dedicated writer. I don't know how posterity will treat many of the things that I've written in the past, but I am convinced that my poetry will endure.

"One of the disheartening features of our civilization," he continued, "is that men, preposterous men, have succeeded in convincing public and critics alike that they are poets. Dylan Thomas, for example, was an admirable alcoholic, but little else. My good friend T. S. Eliot wrote good poetry, but unfortunately that was over twenty years ago. And then, of course, there is the greatest impostor of them all—Ezra Pound.

"Do you know, many years ago, I was invited to a dinner at which Pound was present. When we were introduced, the host said, 'Robert, I want you to meet Ezra Pound. You and he won't like each other.' Well, not only do I not like Ezra Pound and not only do I regard him as a charlatan and an impostor, but I abhor and refuse to forgive his fascism. Lunatic or not, after the war ended and after he had defended the right of the Nazis to slaughter six million Jews, and of the Italians to wipe out the primitive and helpless Ethiopians, I could not in honesty follow Eliot's example and sign my name to a petition for clemency on his behalf. Even if he were truly a poet, I wouldn't have done it; but acknowledging the fact that he is not a poet and hardly a human being, I emphatically refused to assist him. While I am prepared to admit that I am neither an Egyptian nor a Chinese expert and not able to evaluate his attempts at introducing these languages into his cantos, I am an English, Latin, and Greek scholar and I insist that in none of these tongues does Pound write poetry. He is a faker."

Graves paused for a moment, and I began to ask him about contemporary literature. "Frankly," he said, "I am pessimistic about the future prospects of literature. I don't believe that I am confronted with any sort of competition. Naturally, I believe that I am the best writer living today and I say this not out of self-adulation, but merely as a well-established fact.

"Actually, I would welcome a rush of new writers and poets, but then where shall they come from? Surely not from England, and certainly not from America. The United States, incidentally, is an odd case. It experienced some phenomenal luck in the 20's

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with some of its expatriate authors and it's been living on that glory ever since. Actually, American literary life is unimaginably dull and unproductive. It's amazing how a country as large and wealthy as yours should produce so painfully little."

"Were you ever in America?" I asked.

"Yes," Graves answered quickly. "I had that misfortune. I spent some time in your country not too long ago. I lectured at Princeton. It was a very interesting experience and I met some very clever and nice people, but I was never so pleased to return to Majorca in all my life. I like to read about America and I'm even pleased to meet Americans here on the island, but one thing I'm certain of, there is no single compulsion that could get me back to the States again."

"Yet," I said, "it's common knowledge on the island that there are a number of American writers that have settled around Deya and write under your tutelage."

"True," replied Graves. "But that's different. It's a very informal affair. There is no pupil-teacher relationship. Besides, we're friends. You see, I like to do what I can for young serious writers because I recall that I myself had a long, anguishing period of vacillation before my books began to earn enough money for me to live meagerly in one of the cheapest spots in Europe. In fact, it took a full fifteen years before I could in any way consider myself solvent."

MY NEXT question was directed to his personal philosophy. Instantly he became somewhat evasive.

"I believe in the Muse of Poetry. Actually, if you want to understand more about it, I suggest that you read my book called the *White Goddess*. You'll find it illuminating and perhaps even suggestive."

Unlike many other contemporary poets of eminence, Graves has always been an outspoken democrat and humanitarian. "I don't like intolerance and I despise bigotry," he said. "Some of the finest, most sensitive Americans I've met have been Negroes. I think it's shameful that they should be discriminated against for their color."

"Do you have any particular attitude to Jews?" I asked, knowing beforehand that his treatment of the Jewish-Roman struggle during the early part of the Common Era in *Claudius, the God,* flattered the Jews.

"My attitude to the Jews can best be summed up by stating that I consider the Majorcans the most noble people I have ever encountered and that I am convinced that, while at least 10 per cent of them are unmixed Marrano converts, at least 50 per cent of the rest are predominantly of Jewish blood. I have the greatest respect for Judaism and I have attempted to express that sentiment in my books. It's strange though, isn't it, that the Majorcans, who are mostly Jewish themselves and are generally free of intolerance, are strangely anti-Semitic. Do you know that there are parts of this island where a Jew can still not buy any land?"

"Do you believe," I asked, "that your family has fared better on Majorca than they would have in a less primitive part of Europe?"

Graves smiled and called his youngest child to him, the boy who had accompanied him on the beach. "This is Tomas," he said. "He is only two and yet he already understands English and Spanish and probably speaks Majorcan [a form of Catalonian] better than his father. The other two children living with me are nine and thirteen. They both speak French, Spanish, English, and Majorcan more or less fluently and the older of the two, my daughter, has just begun on Greek and Latin. I don't think they could learn much more in London, do you? But, of course, there are limits. As soon as the children reach a certain age, we send them off to boarding school in England."

At that moment Graves's very charming wife, Beryl, entered and scowled at him and me. "Robert," she said in an irritated tone, "will you do nothing today?"

Graves seemed abashed and looked at me apologetically, almost as if to say, "Women are the bane of the world but they do see to it that the work is done."

"Just one last question," I asked hurriedly. "Do you have any plans for the future?"

"Plans?" Graves scratched his gray head. "I shall probably continue doing exactly what I have always done: writing. I expect that things might be a little easier financially for us now since I've sold the screen rights to *I, Claudius*. And I've just learned that Alec Guinness has been hired for the leading role. But that won't affect our lives very much. Majorca is very quiet, a tranquil place, and as long as I remain here I shall continue producing the best I can."

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE BUSINESS ELITE: THEN AND NOW

From Entrepreneur to Executive

MORROE BERGER

THE prestige of the American businessman, appropriately enough in this land of free enterprise and social mobility, has always been great. In other societies, where private enterprise labors under many restrictions and holds out fewer rewards, and venerable professions or traditional aristocracies enjoy a more exalted status, the businessman has never basked in such public favor. For a brief interval during the depression of the 1930's and in its afterglow, his prestige even in America was low, his word little heeded, his story unappealing as a subject for the popular magazines. But the return of prosperity, the extraordinary performance of industry during and since World War II (aided, of course, by labor and government), and the big corporations' emphasis on public service and social responsibility seem to have raised the businessman to new heights of esteem. Of course, there is still a fair amount of criticism of big business in the air, but the big businessman himself is held in very high regard. In novels and short stories, in the movies and now on television, in politics and technology, he is enjoying a bullish period.

This is not the only new development involving the contemporary businessman. Important changes in the social origins, education, experience, and qualifications of America's top executives would seem to be taking place, according to three studies—based on similar methods of research and analysis—that have appeared in recent months.

For *The Big Business Executive. The Factors That Made Him, 1900-1950**, Professor Mabel Newcomer of Vassar College culled reference books, newspapers, local histories and biographies, and consulted the executives themselves, or their relatives, or those chroniclers of local talent, the home-town librarians with their manila folders full of clippings detailing the careers of native sons. Professor Newcomer gathered information about company presidents and board chairmen for three periods: 1899-1903, 1923-25, and 1948-53. Her conclusions for the 1948-53 period are based on the careers of 863 officers in 428 corporations, each with assets of 75 million dollars or more, and together representing a third of all the business wealth in the country.

The findings of a study by W. Lloyd Warner and James C. Abegglen, based on a much larger sampling of businessmen than Professor Newcomer's, are published in two independent volumes. The bulkier and more technical one, *Occupational Mobility in American Business and Industry 1928-1952*†, is directed to the "professional audience," while *Big Business Leaders in America*‡ attempts "to interpret the

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CONTINUING the discussion of social mobility which has been a feature of this department for several years, MORROE BERGER looks into the social backgrounds and changed character and functions of America's top executives. Mr. Berger, formerly with the Scientific Research division of the American Jewish Committee, has taught at Columbia and New York University, and is now an assistant professor in the department of economics and sociology at Princeton. He is the author of *Racial Equality and the Law* (1954) among other works, and has contributed essays on political sociology, Near Eastern studies, and popular culture to numerous professional journals.

*Columbia University Press, 164 pp., $4.00.
†University of Minnesota Press, 315 pp., $5.50.
‡Harper, 243 pp., $3.75.

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larger significance" of the authors' results for the layman. The Warner and Abegglen study repeats the one made in 1928 by F. W. Taussig and C. S. Joslyn, *American Business Leaders* (Macmillan, 1932), and uses the same kind of sample—executives of the largest firms. Ninety per cent of the 8,300 executives investigated by Warner and Abegglen come from firms with an annual gross income of at least five million dollars, and more than half from companies taking in over 50 million dollars a year.

Finally, Herrymon Maurer, in *The Great Enterprise**—though he is more concerned with the nature and activities of corporations and their directors than with the background of their executives—draws on a *Fortune* study (November 1952) of 900 executives of the 250 industrial companies with the largest volume of sales, the 25 biggest railroads, and the 25 biggest utilities, each of these men being among the three highest paid executives of his own corporation. Eighty per cent of these executives earned more than $50,000 annually.

All three studies deal with two major questions: social mobility in the class of business executives, and the character of the business leader's training and experience. Firstly, are the top executives of our biggest companies being recruited more and more from the higher income and occupational groups, or does the poor man's son have a better chance than before of joining the business elite? (It must be borne in mind that this is social mobility of a special type—not the rise of a worker's son to a mere clerical or teaching job, but to the highest paid position in American industry, that of a major executive.) And, secondly, what kind of educational and occupational experience do today's executives have as compared with those of earlier eras or, within the current crop, how do the younger compare with the older?

The answer given by both Warner-Abegglen and Newcomer to the question of social mobilty is pretty much what we might have expected. "Fathers at the elite levels," say Warner and Abegglen, "still find it possible to endow their sons with greater opportunity than those further down enjoy. Nevertheless, they do so now in decreased numbers. The sons of men from the wrong side of the tracks are finding their way increasingly to the places of power and prestige." And Newcomer: "The sons of families in the low-income groups will not reach the top as quickly as the sons of the wealthy, but the chance of arriving eventually is improving." But—as we shall see in a moment—the evidence offered for these conclusions does not yield quite so clear a picture.

Not surprisingly, the first thing both the Warner-Abegglen and the Newcomer studies show is that the sons of businessmen or professionals have a better chance of becoming top executives than, say, the sons of laborers. Thus Warner and Abegglen find that among their 8,300 business leaders, nearly *two-thirds* are the sons of business owners, executives, and professionals; these three occupational groups, however, constituted only about *one-eighth* of the total adult male population of the United States in 1920, when the fathers of the present executives were in their prime. On the other hand, they find that only 15 per cent of the present executives are sons of laborers, who in 1920 constituted 47 per cent of the total male population. Thus the sons of workers are greatly under-represented in the executive class, while the sons of businessmen and professionals are over-represented. Newcomer finds an even greater difference among her more select sampling of executives. About three-quarters of the 860 top executives in her study are the sons of business owners, executives, and professionals, although these callings were filled by only a little more than a tenth of all employed males in 1910. Conversely, she finds that only 2 per cent of the executives had working-class fathers, though workers in 1910 accounted for 65 per cent of all employed men.

These facts only add precision to what we already know—that the men who run American business are more likely to come from a socio-economic group higher than the working class. What we still want to know is what the trend has been in recent decades. Are the privileged groups becoming even more privileged, or do the sons of humble fathers constitute a growing proportion of the top executives? To answer this question, Warner and Abegglen compare the origins of executives today with those of the executives studied in 1928 by Taussig and Joslyn. Of the 1952 group, 15 per cent are the sons of workers, whereas in 1928 only 11 per cent were. The proportion of executives who are the sons of professionals rose, however, from 13 to 14 per cent. The proportion of executives whose fathers were

*Macmillan, 303 pp., $5.00.

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themselves major executives and business owners declined from 58 per cent in 1928 to 52 per cent in 1952. Newcomer's executives show a slightly different trend from 1925 to 1950. Of her 1950 sampling, 63 per cent turned out to be the sons of businessmen and major executives, compared with only 56 per cent in 1925. Executives who were the sons of professionals declined from 23 to 18 per cent, while those with working-class fathers rose from 6 to nearly 8 per cent.

Thus the Warner-Abegglen and the Newcomer conclusions do not quite jibe. Both studies find an increase in the proportion of executives from working-class familes, although Newcomer finds the proportion itself, as well as its increase, smaller than do Warner and Abegglen. As for the sons of professionals who reach the top, Warner and Abegglen discover a slight increase from 13 to 14 per cent, whereas Newcomer charts a decline from 23 to 18 per cent. And as for the sons of businessmen who become executives, Warner and Abegglen trace a drop from 58 to 52 per cent, while Newcomer sees an increase from 56 to 63 per cent.

Yet, as Warner-Abegglen and Newcomer both point out, this is not the whole story. Some of these shifts in the proportion of executives coming from the various occupations between the 1920's and the 1950's may only, as Newcomer puts it, "reflect changes in the total occupational distribution of the male population" in this country. For example, since white-collar workers today constitute a much larger proportion of all employed persons than they did twenty-five years ago, we should not be surprised to learn that the sons of workers comprise an increasing proportion of white-collar workers—there being relatively many more such opportunities today than a generation or two ago.

Warner and Abegglen have tried to take occupational changes of this kind into account by devising a ratio "between the percentage of the population in each occupation and the percentage of business leaders from each occupational background." According to this measure, if 45 per cent of the adult males in one generation were workers, we should expect—given the impossible condition that such factors as education and family influence do not interfere with the workings of pure statistical chance or probability—that 45 per cent of the next generation of business leaders will be the sons of workers; the theoretical "chance" ratio, then, would be 45:45 or 1. But if on investigation it turns out that only 15 per cent of all top executives are actually sons of workers, the "real" mobility ratio becomes 45:15, or 3:1, which means that only a third of the number of workers' sons who should have risen to executive status, if chance alone decided, have in fact done so. This allows us to say that an occupational group is "over-represented" when its ratio is higher than 1, while those groups supplying a lower proportion of executives than their numerical strength in the total population warrants by itself, have a ratio of lower than 1.

HAVING established this standard of measurement, Warner and Abegglen go on to compare the "real" mobility ratios of the various occupational groups in 1928 with those in 1950. They find that for the sons of workers, mobility rose from a low 0.24 to a low 0.32; for the sons of white-collar workers, from 0.71 to 0.80; and for the sons of farmers, from 0.32 to 0.33. These "under-represented" groups, which have been supplying business leaders at a faster rate than their own ranks are being swelled, are therefore tending to be less under-represented. At the same time, the mobility ratios of the sons of businessmen and professionals (the over-represented groups) have declined, respectively, from 9.67 to 4.73 and from 4.33 to 3.50. This means that business and the professions, while they continue to breed executives in much higher proportions than their numbers in the total population warrant, are nevertheless doing so at a declining rate. And this the authors cite as evidence for the contention that the top business careers are opening up more and more to men of lower socio-economic background.

Actually, however, the changes indicated by their mobility ratios for 1928 and 1952 are not very impressive, except for the drop where the sons of businessmen are concerned. These changes certainly do not seem large enough to sustain the weighty conclusions about social mobility that Warner and Abegglen pile onto them: a rise in the ratio of sons of workers among top executives from 0.28 to 0.32 won't go very far to prove the Horatio Alger myth. Moreover, we do not know whether this difference is the result largely of chance and the particular sample of executives the two studies happened to catch, or whether the difference is so great that it would show up in other samples. There are formal tests of statistical

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significance to determine such matters, but unfortunately the authors don't tell us whether they have made such tests. Even assuming, however, that the differences are indeed an accurate measure of what has happened to mobility in this country, they are still much too small to bear the weight of Warner-Abegglen's confident belief that mobility from bottom to top has increased significantly since 1928.

But what accounts for the discrepancies between the Warner-Abegglen findings and those of Newcomer? The former, it will be recalled, found a greater increase than Newcomer over the last quarter-century in the proportion of executives stemming from working-class families, and with respect to the sons of businessmen, Warner and Abegglen noted a decline between 1928 and 1952, whereas Newcomer saw a rise in approximately the same period. It is pretty clear that these incongruous results can be ascribed to the fact that the two studies covered dissimilar samples. Warner-Abegglen's group of 8,300 are not necessarily the very highest executives in the country. Newcomer's 863, on the other hand, includes only the very highest officials in the companies selected—that is, the presidents and the chairmen of boards of directors. Since a less exalted status makes an executive eligible for their sampling, Warner and Abegglen naturally find greater mobility than Newcomer, who remains at the most rarefied and least accessible heights of the business hierarchy.

This explanation of the difference between the two studies is borne out by the *Fortune* study mentioned earlier. Restricting itself to 900 top executives of the 300 largest companies in their field, the *Fortune* study is of course closer in nature to Newcomer's than to Warner and Abegglen's. Instead of comparing the executives of today with those of the 1920's, *Fortune* confines itself to the present crop, but it does compare the occupations of the fathers of executives under fifty years of age with those of the fathers of all 900 executives. This is another way to establish a trend; and *Fortune* finds that the trend is toward less mobility. Thus 62 per cent of the 900 fathers were themselves businessmen but 68 per cent of the fathers of executives under fifty were businessmen. Conversely, while 8 per cent of the 900 fathers were workers, only 3 per cent of the fathers of the younger executives were workers. According to this study, then, the very top executives are being drawn to an increasing degree from the sons of businessmen, and less and less from among the workers.

What can we conclude from all this? If a *broad range* of executive jobs in industry today is considered, an increase shows up in the proportion of workers' sons who enter the charmed circle and a decrease in the proportion of businessmen's sons who do so (Warner-Abegglen). But if only the *very top* executive jobs are in question, then the chances of the workers' sons have increased only slightly (Newcomer), or have actually declined (*Fortune*), while the chances of businessmen's sons have increased (Newcomer and *Fortune*). In other words, there has been some movement from the bottom to the lower limits of the top, but very little to the upper limits of the top.

What these studies demonstrate is not so much that the myth of rags to riches is a reality in America, but that the much more prosaic progress from comfort to luxury is a commonplace among us. Newcomer calculates that the executives coming from poor familes constitute a smaller proportion of all executives today than they did in 1900, which seems to be a reflection of the increasing rarity of poverty itself in this country. The proportion from wealthy families has shrunk much more since 1900, but the gap has been filled by the sons of middle-income families. Then there is the question of inheritance and nepotism. Both Warner-Abegglen and Newcomer find that direct inheritance of positions has declined, especially in the larger firms. But this is misleading, for both studies demonstrate the growing importance of education as a qualification for reaching the top in business—among the 1928 business leaders, for example, only 32 per cent were college graduates, compared with 57 per cent among the 1952 executives—and it is still true that college education is reserved largely for the middle and upper classes. As Warner and Abegglen put it: "The men from the higher origins get the most education, and the ones from the lower, the least." "Inheritance" has taken the new form of providing a child with the *means* to get ahead. Newcomer describes the change in this way: "For all groups of executives, family assistance increasingly takes the form of providing a college education, and perhaps professional training at the graduate level, rather than capital or a place in the family business or the business of some friend."

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The influence of inheritance or family wealth on education is important in another way too, since the sons of the wealthy, whether they go into business or the professions, soon earn more than do the sons of the less wealthy in the same occupations. A few years ago Ernest Havemann and Patricia Salter West showed in *They Went to College* (Harcourt, Brace, 1952), that a decreasing proportion of those who worked their way through college have been entering high-paid professions like medicine, law, and dentistry, whereas a steady (and higher) proportion of those whose families paid for their tuition are entering the more lucrative fields. Similarly, among the graduates who worked while at school, a steady (and higher) proportion have been entering the low-paid professions like teaching, the clergy, and the fine arts; among the graduates who did not have to work there has been a considerable drop in the number who have had to satisfy themselves with these jobs. Moreover, the two types of graduates fare differently even when they go into business. About two-thirds of each category wind up in business, but those who did not have to support themselves through school do much better than the ones who did.

What does this mean for the present group of executives? It means that even though a substantial number of *their* sons never become executives, many of those who don't will end up fairly comfortably in one of the high-paid professions. Indeed, Warner and Abegglen show that of the sons of executives in 1952, perhaps a third have become professionals—and although the authors don't tell us anything more, we can guess that they are in the professions that require longer and more expensive training and pay off better financially.

NONE of these laboriously established conclusions—that mobility from bottom to top is limited, that if you're going to be wealthy it's better to start by being born rich, and that money, as the adage has it, still goes to money—is startling. Why should anyone expect workers' sons to become executives even in approximately the same proportion as the sons of businessmen? If the facts do not bear out the most optimistic notions, does this mean that the economy is a total failure? Our ideas about the extent of social mobility have undergone an interesting change. In the 1930's we were told that mobility was declining; it was assumed that in the 19th century mobility was rather high. Now we are being told by many observers that mobility is rising; and the assumption is that earlier in this century it was rather low.

Both assertions are probably exaggerations, for at no time does mobility seem to have been as high or as low as either position claimed. Several studies of the social origins of business leaders after the Civil War show that even in the days before the closing of the frontier, the industrial elite came from the upper socio-economic strata and was much more highly educated than the rest of the population. From one such study dealing with the 1870's, by Frances W. Gregory and Irene D. Neu ("The American Industrial Elite in the 1870's," in *Men in Business*, edited by Willam Miller, Harvard University Press, 1952), we learn that 51 per cent of 303 top executives in the largest textile, steel, and railroad companies were the sons of businessmen, only 25 per cent the sons of farmers (even though America was still largely an agricultural country) and only 8 per cent the sons of workers—all this despite the myths so widely accepted about the openness of our class system. Gregory and Neu compare their findings with those of Miller (the editor of the volume in which their paper appears), who examined the origins of top executives in 1901-10. In this thirty-year period the proportion of business leaders whose fathers had likewise been in business rose slightly from 51 to 55 per cent. These results are in extraordinarily close agreement with those of both Newcomer and Warner-Abegglen; their data for 1900 show that exactly 51 per cent of executives were the sons of businessmen.

The achievement and virtue of the American economy, it would seem, is not so much that it has permitted considerable social mobility—it assuredly has, but not nearly to the extent many observers have supposed—but rather, that it has provided an increasingly high standard of living for all social classes, and, in recent years, the less privileged classes in particular. As for the claims of social mobility, the least favorable thing one can say is that they are premature. This is the conclusion Professor Eli Chinoy of Smith College reaches at the end of his survey of the evidence in the *American Sociological Review* of April 1955. And the most favorable thing we can say is—as William Petersen concludes in his COMMENTARY article "Is America Still the Land of Opportunity?" (November 1953)—that a lot

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of Americans reach occupations with higher status and pay than their fathers enjoyed and that many Americans improve their occupational standing in their own lifetime. But mobility in this sense is not very marked. As Petersen puts it: "Its range . . . tends to be limited: that is, farmers may become workmen; workers may rise to a higher level of skill or become small businessmen or lower white-collar employees; lower employees may rise to executives; and professional positions tend to be filled from upper white-collar or business groups." Workers, that is, don't become top executives.

In contrast to the uncertainty regarding mobility or, at best, the certainty of its limited range, there is no question at all about the vast increase in the real income and the standard of living of the American working class. Reviewing "The Facts About 'Capitalist Inequality'" in COMMENTARY of June 1951, William G. Grampp pointed out that in 1850 the average worker put in 66 hours a week for 14 dollars. A hundred years later he worked only 36 hours for 62 dollars weekly—the dollar figures being corrected for price rises and inflation in this century. At mid-century the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics published a special issue of its *Monthly Labor Review* (July 1950) examining the changes in workers' lives since 1900. In one article in the issue ("Changes in Mode of Living"), Witt Bowden reported that real earnings doubled during this half-century; that the work week declined by 15 or 20 hours; that workers now have about a third of their income to spend on things other than food, shelter, and clothing, compared with only a sixth in 1901; that housing is better, education more readily available, freedom to join unions and freedom from company domination greater; and that work itself is physically less burdensome, although its pace may have quickened.

Such economic gains, with their social and personal concomitants, rather than social mobility, are the achievement of the American economic and political system. Greater equalization of incomes is of course another development in the American economy. The Social Science Research Council and the U.S. Bureau of the Census have recently published a comprehensive study of the *Income of the American People* by Herman P. Miller (Wiley, 260 pp., $5.50) which shows, first of all, that in 1940-50 the gap between lowest and highest incomes narrowed. This came about as a result of the fact that average income for all Americans rose during the period, but not uniformly for all groups. "The greatest relative gains were made by the lowest paid occupations, and the smallest relative gains were made by the highest paid occupations." Moreover, the range of incomes within most occupations has likewise narrowed.

In other words, the lowest income groups have been able to share more and more in America's great wealth, although their relative social status has remained pretty much what it was. They're better off economically, but not so much because they're advanced occupationally or because the occupations themselves have been shuffled. In fact, the relative income position of the various occupations, as Miller shows, has hardly changed at all; the job that put a man into the lowest tenth of all income groups in 1939 was still likely to keep him in the lowest tenth a decade later. Other studies also indicate that the average person hasn't gone much higher, if at all, in the occupational hierarchy, but that those at the lower end are enjoying more real income than ever before.

But these questions of mobility are perhaps less spectacular than the changes that have taken place in the character of the businessman. A picture of the modern top executive emerges from these studies that deserves careful scrutiny. The big businessman was once a captain of industry, an organizer of great aggregates of capital, a builder of the better mouse-trap to whose door people beat a path. As time goes on, these descriptions are becoming more and more anachronistic. According to Newcomer, for example, in 1900 only a fifth of 313 executives had begun their careers as salaried administrators, but in 1950 two-fifths of the 871 studied had come up this way. Warner and Abegglen, dealing with a much larger sample and therefore including lower rungs in the managerial ladder, discover that 82 per cent of today's executives reached the executive level fifteen years after taking their first jobs. During the same period, from 1900 to 1950, Newcomer finds that the proportion of entrepreneurs and capitalists among the major executives declined sharply from 44 per cent to only 15 per cent. Warner and Abegglen's sample includes only 5 per cent who can lay claim to the good old American busi-

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ness virtue of owning their own business. Obviously a very large majority of today's executives have themselves never really met a payroll.

Or take the matter of educational level. The proportion of executives with a college degree has always been much higher than the proportion of the total male population who are college graduates. Even in the 1870's, when attendance at a university was rather rare, more than a third of the executives studied by Gregory and Neu had a college degree. Since then the highly educated executives have grown more and more numerous, until today, according to Newcomer, Warner-Abegglen, and *Fortune,* they constitute 60 to 85 per cent of all executives. These findings demonstrate that today the high road to business leadership is formal education and a slow, undramatic process of promotion, rather than the breaking of new entrepreneurial paths. Indeed, from Newcomer we learn that in 1900 half the executives reached their positions principally by organizing or investing in the firm, while fewer than a fifth had worked their way up to the top from less exalted jobs within the company. Today the proportions are reversed: half of the 1950 class of executives had climbed up through the salariat, while only an eighth owed their positions to entrepreneurship or capital investment.

All this points to the increasing "professionalization" of business leadership—greater emphasis on general education (witness the businessmen's discovery of the value of the liberal arts course) or on specialized training (witness the growing importance of the business school in undergraduate and graduate work).

The professionalization or bureaucratization of business documented in the studies examined here is no new phenomenon. Back in 1921 (to confine ourselves to a relatively recent period) Veblen, in some famous passages in *The Engineers and the Price System,* distinguished between the "industrial arts," which are a "matter of tangible performance" calling for "an increasingly exhaustive knowledge of material fact," and the "business arts" of *bargaining, effrontery, salesmanship, make-believe.*" Veblen was already noting that "management of corporate business has, in effect, been shifting into the hands of a bureaucratic clerical staff. The corporation financier of popular tradition is taking on the character of a chief of bureau." Some years later Joseph Schumpeter observed that "innovation," the entrepreneur's main function, "itself is being reduced to routine. Technological progress is increasingly becoming the business of teams of trained specialists who turn out what is required and make it work in predictable ways." Newcomer, Warner-Abegglen, and *Fortune* all supply statistical backing for these observations.

But they also show how the character of the bureaucracy is changing. Whereas it used to be the "operations and production" men or the "general management" men who most often reached the top, now (according to Newcomer's and *Fortune's* figures) the sales and advertising men are more and more forging ahead (and Newcomer adds the finance department men too). The sharp trend away from the technical "production" departments as a source for top executives is further reflected in *Fortune's* data on the academic subject that most interested the executives when at school. The trend here is toward the arts, law, business, and economics, and away from science and engineering, which is the field of academic interest named by 46 per cent of all executives, but only by 29 per cent of those under fifty years of age.

Accompanying these changes has been the discovery of the "human relations" approach by industry in our time. The corporation executive has become a community leader, a public figure. Corporations show more concern than ever with the consumer. Even if this policy aims only to increase sales, it nevertheless has a great effect on the public position of the firm. Thus corporations are now the most generous contributors to charities. And they have begun to give grants to liberal arts colleges and universities on a large scale (itself an interesting bit of evidence that business recognizes its dependence on higher education for the development of managerial talent).

WE HAVE been considering social mobility and professionalization separately, but they are actually related. As an occupation or a calling becomes professionalized its ranks are bound to be opened to a broader range of social groups, since entrance into a profession is typically governed by the attainment of competence through education and experience rather than by social or family position. The ability to acquire this degree of competence of course depends in part—but only in part—on

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one's financial resources; no other restrictions bar the lowly, as they did formerly. Despite professionalization, as we have seen, occupational mobility throughout our society—and especially from the bottom to the very top of the business world—has been rather limited. Education is now a prime avenue of approach to high places, but education is still available mainly to the middle and upper classes.

But there are other limiting factors at work in American society apart from education. Professor Newcomer observes, "without further comment," that "no woman and no Negro has been found among the top executives of this study." There are, however, some foreign-born who have managed to get to the top, although the great majority of these come from English-speaking countries. As for religion, Episcopalians especially, but also Presbyterians and Congregationalists, are more heavily represented among executives than among the general population. Roman Catholics are considerably under-represented—in 1950 they constituted less than a tenth of the executives but nearly a third of the country's total population. Jews are better represented; they constitute 5 per cent of the executives Newcomer studied, which is rather close to their numerical strength in the total population (6 per cent). But, as we might have suspected, the 18 Jewish executives on Newcomer's list are concentrated in merchandising, entertainment, and mass communications; few are in heavy industry or utilities, and none in railroads. Moreover, an impressive 40 per cent of the Jewish executives reached the top by organizing their own companies, compared with only 6 per cent for all executives. Entrepreneurship and the spirit of the Protestant ethic, traditionally viewed as the economic and spiritual backbone of the free enterprise system, seem to be embodied these days mainly in Jewish businessmen. As Nathan Glazer remarked in his review of the "Social Characteristics of American Jews, 1654-1954" (*American Jewish Year Book,* Vol. 56, 1955): "In general, the tendency of Jews was to stay out of the bureaucracies of government and private corporations. In the case of the large corporations, anti-Jewish prejudice played an important role in restricting the number of Jews. . . . But even where prejudice played no role, or practically none, Jews seemed to prefer occupations where they were less dependent on others and had a chance eventually to become completely independent."

There have, incidentally, been several claims about the "revival" of religion among businessmen. Since church membership is increasing in general, it may well be that it is also increasing among businessmen, although we have no evidence that their turn to religion is either more profound or more pervasive than in the country at large. *Fortune,* ever alert for the slightest indication of a trend among businessmen, several years ago (October 1953) ran an article hinting that businessmen were becoming more and more religious. This article insisted, against the cynics and some skeptical clergymen, that the turn to religion was really spontaneous and not calculated as a means of bringing God into the firm. Newcomer presents some interesting data on this point. Although she warns that her information on the religion of executives is incomplete, she observes that "there is a good deal of evidence that a large proportion of the executives do not belong to any church and have no strong denominational preference." The proportions of executives having no apparent religious "preference" are 44 per cent in 1900, 37 per cent in 1925 and 59 per cent in 1950. From this, it looks as though executives are not churchgoers to the same extent as the general population, among whom about 60 per cent are said to be members of a religious body. One may well ask what has happened to the Protestant ethic that was once so intimately related to the spirit of capitalism; it seems to have vanished with entrepreneurship.

For some years the Luce publications, chroniclers of business activity and guardians of business values, have been disturbed by the tendency of college seniors to prefer employment to enterprise. Now that the entrepreneurial spirit is apparently shunned by businessmen, it is being embraced by publicists and even by scholars. Historians are finding overlooked subjects (not to mention virtues) in the entrepreneurs of bygone eras. Economists and sociologists specializing in the study of "underdeveloped areas" prescribe heavy doses of the spirit of entrepreneurship to help open the clogged paths to industrialization. Ironically, as traditional entrepreneurial audacity wanes in the United States, the quality of mind and purpose it once fostered is advanced as the greatest asset the West has to offer the poorer countries of Asia eager (despite their "spirituality") to taste national power and material comfort.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Jews, Christians, Hellenists

To the Editor of Commentary:

Professor Hadas ("Judaism and the Hellenistic Experience," August 1956) limited his historical analysis to the "classic" encounter between Pharisaic Torah religion and Hellenistic humanism and touched only by implication on the perplexities of our modern situation.

The modern case differs, however, from the classic paradigm in at least two ways: (1) The challenge of modern humanism is even more intensive, since it touches upon the very right of Jewish existence and (2) our response is less forthright than the answer of Philo.

The difference is largely due to a contemporary of Philo, another Hellenistic Jew, a Pharisee reared in the Rabbinic Torah religion, who turned apostle to the Gentiles and brought to them the apocalyptic message of the crucified Messiah as a new Torah. Paul's new Torah recognizes the Jew only in a special role in the universal drama of redemption. And the humanism of the West is the heir of Christian theology as much as it is indebted to the legacy of the Greeks and Romans. Are not Augustine and Dante as much a part of our humanistic tradition as Plato and Vergil?

The Rabbinic Torah religion established its realm inside the bounds of Halachah refusing to participate in the ways of the world, Greek or Christian. This "sacrifice of humanism" may well inspire awe and terror—it is not lacking in heroic will. The Jew was forced to walk on a lonely road among the ways of the nations.

But we who claim to be the heirs of the Rabbinic tradition that separates the congregation from the world are very eager to share in the intellectual and even social life of our environment. We go to college and send our children to college, which inherited its legacy from the Greek gymnasium (not from the Pharisaic *beth hamidrash*) and continues the tradition of the medieval Christian university (not of the Talmudic yeshiva). Rarely, however, does someone admit that "the Hellenistic era appears to be more directly relevant to contemporary Jewish problems than any other period." Hadas's historical essay is a courageous statement in the confused state of our spiritual situation and thus worth more than a score of high-sounding theological or philosophical statements on the subject.

Jacob Taubes

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Moses Hadas's article in your August issue has attempted the difficult task of reversing the judgment of history. The historical reality is that the Jews, except for temporary truces ordered by political and practical considerations, were in a state of permanent ideological, if not physical, conflict with the Hellenistic Greco-Roman world. Nor was this so unenviable a situation as one might erroneously surmise from modern experience, for the Jews were engaged in a fight to the finish with Greco-Roman ideas, and they might have won had not the victorious role been taken from them by the parallel movement of the Christians. The bitter hostility to Judaism expressed by the most enlightened Roman thinkers cannot be interpreted as anti-Semitism, in our sense: it was the manifestation of real fear before a hostile and mighty force.

Now Professor Hadas tells us that coexistence would have been possible if the Jews had followed the suggestions offered in the letter of *Aristeas to Philocrates*. Professor Hadas has done a brilliant job of editing this document and making its meaning clear to the learned world, and he is entitled to stress its importance. It is legitimate, and stimulating, to speculate as to what might have happened if the Jews had taken advice from *Aristeas;* but if they did not, it was because they could not have satisfied the Greeks without losing their own identity—the best they could do, under the circumstances, was to follow the Emperor Claudius's more peremptory advice to cultivate their own garden without trying to become Greeks.

As to Professor Hadas's opinion that *Aristeas* provides a "classical model" for the survival of Jewish culture in the European world, a word of caution may be in order. During the Greco-Roman era, Jews and Pagans experimented

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with several formulas for coexistence; on the Jewish side there were as many shades of attitude to "assimilation" as there have been in the modern world. The *Aristeas* letter was over-optimistic—it came early in the history of Judeo-Hellenistic relations, before the Jewish question had become an explosive one, before there was a long history of violent anti-Jewish outbreaks. Professor Hadas declares that the policy of rapprochement which *Aristeas* advocated could have succeeded except that it "was halted by the Romans and by the special measures taken by the Jews." On this he contradicts (as he himself avers) the prevailing opinion. It may be that Professor Hadas could not document his case within the confines of an article, but in the present state of the evidence one must agree with the historian Simon Dubnow that "between Rome and Israel there gaped an abyss. In the ancient world it would have been possible to attain a hybrid mixture of Jewish and Hellenistic culture elements, but this could never have developed into a true Judeo-Roman syncretism."

This does not mean that a Jewish culture cannot exist in the frame of a Western culture; it *can* exist within Western culture *as transformed* by Christianity. However painful the history of Jewish-Christian relations may have been, the spreading by Christianity of Jewish values and ideas has made it possible for the Jews to be more at home in the European world than they were in the Greco-Roman one. The question of the mutual acceptance of Judaism and humanism depends on the given definition of humanism. If classical humanism as transformed by St. Augustine and St. Ambrose is meant, the possibility of mutual acceptance exists; but if one means by humanism a revival *in toto* of pagan culture, there can be no coexistence, and on this Jewish thought has always been clear. The intellectual question has practical implications: it is a fact that whenever in modern times there has been a rejection of the Helleno-Christian humanistic tradition, the survival of Jewish tradition and of the Jews as an identifiable group has become impossible.

Livio C. Stecchini
Brooklyn College
Brooklyn, New York

Asia & the "Liberal Fallacy"

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have read Irving Kristol's review of Chester Bowles's book (August 1956) with great interest and completely approve of the philosophic foundations of his criticism. My personal experiences in Asia bear this criticism out.

We see the world conflict in terms of certain philosophic juxtapositions, such as freedom versus tyranny, the individual versus the total state, democracy versus Communism. Yet these juxtapositions are not only irrelevant to the situation in Asia and Africa, they are also unintelligible to almost all Asians and Africans. Between these philosophic abstractions and the actual aspirations of the masses of Asia and Africa there exists no organic relation at all. What these peoples want is not freedom in the abstract but freedom from white domination and exploitation, real or fancied. What they seek is not a higher standard of living in the rational, individualistic terms which capitalism has developed in the West, but rather industrial development as the symbol and actuality of national power. In this context the steel mill performs a symbolic function which for other societies the cathedral, the feudal castle, or the monarch's palace performed. Similarly the steel mill is sought regardless of the rational function it performs for the national economy and the welfare of the individual.

To identify the power objectives of this irrational upheaval with the rational goals of an enlightened liberal capitalism is both intellectually mistaken and politically self-defeating. For the uncritical and undiscriminating sympathy with those revolutionary movements, derived from a non-existing philosophic affinity which would be irrelevant in any case, blinds us to our own political interests and disarms us in the face of mortal peril. Reading into the policies of another nation our own ideals, we persuade ourselves that the other nation wants what we want and hence deserves our support. This is a typical liberal fallacy. Palmerston and Gladstone were guilty of it. When Hitler demanded the Sudetenland by invoking the liberal principle of national self-determination, the London *Times* came to his ideological support with obvious pride: "Self-determination, the professed principle of the Treaty of Versailles, has been invoked by Herr Hitler against its written text, and his appeal has been allowed." Thus we tend to believe today that what the signers of the Declaration of Independence wanted is identical with what the revolutionary leaders of Asia and Africa want. This being so, we support them with policies that might be adequate if the ideals of our revolutionary tradition were identical with theirs.

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Scope of Orthodoxy

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his book review of *Justice and Judaism* in your August issue, Rabbi Jakob Petuchowski makes a number of controversial statements, but one, in particularly bad taste, stands out: namely, that Reform "made it possible for the Jew . . . to widen the scope of his religion, and to find religious outlets in philanthropy rather than in the kitchen."

The implications behind this, often heard from cynics, who "know the price of everything and the value of nothing," are unfair and downright untrue. For generations Jews—Orthodox Jews—have been ideally characterized as *rachamonim, bay'shonim,* and *gomlei chasadim* (merciful, modest, and doers of charity), and to this day the observant Orthodox Jew is at least as philanthropic as his co-religionist Reformer. The oft maligned "ghetto Jew" in Williamsburg gives a far larger percentage of his income to charity than the wealthier, "ethical" and "cultured" Reform Jew. It is only among these "fanatic" people that the following incident, for which I can personally vouch, could occur; a poor laborer, probably legitimately eligible for charity himself, borrowed money in order to contribute to his more unfortunate brethren overseas. It is in the Orthodox *shul* where a weary traveler can be assured of an invitation to a member's home, a meal, and a night's lodging. I would advise the rabbi to spend a few hours learning the laws of *hachnosas orchim* (hospitality to strangers) and *zedakah* (charity) from those very tomes which he calls "obsolete."

Reform did not widen the scope of Judaism, but rather narrowed it by confining it to philanthropy. It is to Orthodoxy's credit that it includes in its scope the kitchen—and the living room and bedroom too. One cannot be a Jew in one sphere only. While the author accuses Orthodoxy of being too narrow, many of his colleagues consider it too pervasive and stifling. Even if Orthodoxy wanted to change it would not know in which direction it might satisfy more Reform rabbis.

Rabbi Petuchowski gratuitously analyzed the reasons for Orthodoxy's "zealous defense of . . . minutiae." May I take a similar, if unwarranted, liberty of analyzing the motives of the author's biting the hand that fed him—the Judaism that kept our people together for two thousand years. Perhaps the rabbi feels a certain sense of guilt at his abandonment of the faith of his fathers, and must rationalize his behavior.

Seymour M. Glick (M.D.)
New Haven, Connecticut

Rabbi Petuchowski *writes:*

Dr. Glick might possibly modify his indignant *argumentum ad hominem* if he could be made to see that what was intended in my review of *Justice and Judaism* was not a denigration of Orthodoxy, but rather an attempt to account for the fact that, at a definite period of history, Reform rallied under the banner of "Prophetic Religion." It was not my intention to cast aspersions on the philanthropic record of traditional Jews throughout the ages. They, too, are the heirs of the teachings of the Prophets. I lack the statistical data either to agree or to disagree with Dr. Glick's evaluation as to where the greater charity is to be found. Perhaps, though, he is a little harsh on the "wealthier, 'ethical' and 'cultured' Reform Jew." After all, it was the latter who was mainly responsible for the creation of Jewish hospitals and other welfare institutions in this country, which may indeed (and this is said with regret) lack some of the intimacy and personal involvement of the traditional *hachnosas orchim* and *zedakah,* but which nonetheless have proved quite effective in gearing those traditional obligations to a 20th-century community of some five million souls.

What is implied in my statement which Dr. Glick finds to be in particularly bad taste is simply this: In a real and consistent Orthodoxy all laws, be they ethical or ritual, are of equal importance, since they go back to the same divine revelation. It follows that even a slight infringement of a ritual or dietary rule constitutes "sin," and, if done wittingly and repeatedly, stamps the transgressor as a *mumar* (apostate), and thus practically places him beyond the fold.

In the Emancipation period, this unbending (and absolutely logical) "orthodox" position drove literally thousands to the baptismal font. If Reform has managed to stem that tide, it was in a large measure due to the fact that Reform differentiated between the ethical and the ceremonial, laying the greatest stress on the former, and thus providing a means of Jewish self-identification even where the kitchen was (rightly or wrongly) sacrificed in the process of acculturation, and where, by Orthodox standards, a "break with Judaism" would already have been diagnosed.

That philanthropy by itself does not, in this writer's view, constitute the end-all and be-all of Judaism—even in its non-Orthodox formulation—is, I believe, sufficiently indicated in the review in question. But the many *t'refah*-eating contributors to the Jewish Welfare Fund and the UJA would tend to support the attacked statement that Reform "made it possible for the Jew of the Emancipation and post-

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Emancipation era . . . to find religious outlets in philanthropy rather than in the kitchen."

Detroit's Library

To the Editor of Commentary:

Re Gerald Weales's article on Detroit in the September issue ("Small-town Detroit"): I wonder why Mr. Weales did not bother to speak of the Detroit Public Library, regarded among librarians as one of the truly great, modern American public libraries.

Arnold P. Sable

Revere, Mass.

Pentateuch: Oral & Written

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his review of my book *The Growth of the Pentateuch* (July) Mr. James Brown negates the value of my thorough literary analysis by the argument that the Pentateuch was originally a collection of orally transmitted texts redacted in post-Exilic times. This Scandinavian theory of Professor Engnell is untenable for these reasons: (1) The land of Canaan conquered by Israel had cities with a literate upper stratum. At least the monarchy needed literati (officials, priests, princes, etc.) and textbooks. (2) The Biblical historians record that Moses wrote down laws on tablets and on *sefer* (written document). He also is recorded to have written a solemn curse of Amalek, an itinerary, and a song. Joshua is recorded to have written a covenant in a *sefer,* Samuel to have recorded the duties of kingship. (3) Two lost old books are quoted in early records: Sefer Hayashar, a collection of poems (Song of Ayalon, Josh. 10:13; Lament of David on Saul and Jonathan, II Sam. 1:18); and Sefer of the Wars of Yahweh (Num. 21:4). All these facts presuppose the existence of textbooks in ancient monarchic Israel. That does not exclude (as I myself say in my book) that laws of elders or priestly precepts and other texts were transmitted orally before they were written. But that was before the time I assume that the Yahwist master narrator (10th century B.C.E.) and his annotators of the 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th centuries B.C.E. wrote their texts. Since the annotator frequently added only a brief passage or some phrases, that presupposes that he had a written text before him and annotated it by writing. I have never "seen the Pentateuch as a book in the modern sense," but as a growing document, as a textbook for princes, priests, and prophets. . . .

Immanuel Lewy

New York City

Mr. Brown *writes:*

I am still not convinced that the substitution of a single document plus annotators for several documents plus editors is, from the Scandinavian position, any less of a "modern book-view" than the Wellhausen analysis. The point is whether, from what we know of the role of oral tradition in ancient Oriental cultures, we ought to look at the Pentateuch in this way at all. For in his letter Dr. Lewy does not really come to grips with the Scandinavian position. No one would deny the existence of written traditions in pre-Exilic Israel, besides oral ones. But it is argued that in this sort of culture, writing was the business of specialists, and then mostly used for certain practical purposes of commerce and diplomacy. Otherwise, living speech plays a much more dominating role than writing in the handing down of the kind of material we have in the Pentateuch—historical traditions, epics, cult legends, and, to some degree, laws. Here, oral tradition is primary and creative: written tradition is secondary and derivative. Readers of Commentary who are interested in pursuing these points further may be referred to a short book, *Oral Tradition,* by a Danish scholar, Eduard Nielsen, which I believe is obtainable in America from the Blessing Book Store in Chicago. Nielsen also makes the point that the reduction of oral tradition to writing is not the sign of a cultural peak, but of a failure of nerve such as that produced by the fall first of Israel, then of Judah.

Dylan Thomas

To the Editor of Commentary:

As trustees for the copyrights of Dylan Thomas . . . we wish to make as complete a collection as possible of the texts of his letters. May we, therefore, beg the hospitality of your columns to ask if those who possess letters from him will be so kind as to allow us to copy them. We undertake that all originals will be acknowledged promptly and returned without delay as soon as copies have been made, and that the copies would be regarded as confidential and disclosed to no one without the consent of its recipient or owner, whom we or an eventual editor would approach in due course.

We should be grateful if all letters could be sent and all correspondence about them addressed to Stuart Thomas, c/o D. O. Thomas and Co., 103 Walter Road, Swansea, Glamorganshire, Great Britain.

Stuart Thomas
Wynford Vaughan Thomas
David Higham

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

American Stereotypes

COUSINS AND STRANGERS: COMMENTS ON AMERICA BY COMMONWEALTH FUND FELLOWS FROM BRITAIN: 1946-1952. *Edited by S. GORLEY PUTT. Published for the Commonwealth Fund by Harvard University Press. 222 pp. $3.50.*

Reviewed by CLEMENT GREENBERG

EVERY year the Commonwealth Fund, administered by the British but set up by a rich American, sends to this country, for study in their respective fields, twenty university graduates and five civil servants from Great Britain, along with five civil servants from the Dominions, two more from the Colonies, and up to three "editorial journalists." They submit informal reports, and the present book is made up of excerpts from seventy-odd of these, arranged under headings that go from the very broad to the rather specific (e.g. "Medicine," "Road Traffic"). A pretty accurate and sympathetic if sketchy view of many aspects of our life is afforded, but hardly anything gets described or explained in a really fresh way. This is not solely because the contributors write for non-Americans. The fact is that the American character, and the American scene, lend themselves to stereotyping, and most of the stereotypes seem to be true. Moreover, it is we Americans who are usually the first to recognize their truth.

Perhaps this can be explained by the unique nature of the tradition of American self-criticism no less than by the nature itself of the American people and of America. In most other countries earnest self-criticism has been aimed at a single class, the middle class. The English criticize their philistines, but not the English as such; the French their bourgeoisie, not the French as such; and it has been a good deal the same with the Italians and the Germans (though there are many exceptions in the latter case). It is quite different with us. The whole of America is seen as middle class in character, if not in social actuality, and so when we criticize our middle class or classes—and critical Americans share the animus of critical people the world over against the middle class—we criticize Americans as such. What is partial self-criticism for others becomes total for us, and hence we have tended to be more aware of our national self than others are of theirs.

Another reason is the fact itself of our being so predominantly middle class. It would seem that where the middle class can have its way it inclines toward openness and outwardness, if only to promote that mutual understanding which is so beneficial to efficiency and trade. There is also our frontier tradition, which is really the "tradition," as much operative in the city as elsewhere, of uprooted people who must turn strangers into friends as quickly as possible. Whatever other factors are accountable, we do in this country behave as though intent on Hegel's millennium, when the public and the private shall be as one, and the outside of a man declare everything about his inside. We sound, in Mr. Putt's book as in others, like an imaginary country about which Gullivers can find out almost everything. And we sound all the more so because of the ostensible sameness that goes with our openness, the uniformity which smothers those inconsistencies and contradictions that would break us out of the realm of the imaginary into that of the unthinkably real.

THE openness and sameness that make us so easy to stereotype are themselves stereotypes. They are stereotypes (and not the only ones) that we live out, which go deeper than ideas or words, and form actual part of ourselves. They determine the American personality, which is a standardized one, as we ourselves and all the world know. Without a standardized personality, we doubtless would not manifest that "unity amid diversity" which is frequently remarked upon in *Cousins and Strangers;* without it, we probably would not

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get along with one another as well as we do, given our ethnic, racial, and regional heterogeneity. But to grant this does not make the standardized personality any the less a burden, or enable us to refute the devastating criticism implicit in even such a friendly book as *Cousins and Strangers*.

The English and the French—especially their cultivated classes—have a standardized manner, but it is a *manner*, not a personality, and leaves plenty of room for individuality and temperament. A standardized personality does not. And whereas the English or the French manner can make many a person appear more interesting than he really is, the American personality most often has the opposite effect. One commits oneself to a personality and believes in it; a manner can be put on and off, and private inclinations can be indulged and personal goals pursued behind it. A personality, ostensibly declaring the whole of oneself, leaves too little of the self over for self-cultivation or self-development. Not that many Englishmen and Frenchmen do not exhaust their selves in their manners as Americans exhaust their selves in their personalities: only the former are not expected to do so, and the latter are. And various informal sanctions are imposed to make sure that this expectation is met.

The observation in *Cousins and Strangers* that struck me most was A. Jane Pinsent's (who was a Fellow in microbiology): "It is uncommon to find children listening to the conversations of their elders, or taking much notice of advice, and it is natural, therefore, that they miss many opportunities for learning by any means but direct experience. Moreover, having thus little contact with older people who have formed standards of their own, the process of formulation of private aims and ambitions is often greatly delayed. The standards of the group are readily adopted, success being measured entirely in terms of admiration elicited from the group. . . ." We used to think that this applied only to the children of immigrants, but Miss Pinsent makes no such qualification.

WHAT has been said above is not new; it is in the orthodox tradition of American self-criticism. But we are beginning to see, I think, how little this piling of true stereotypes and clichés on one another avails to rid us of what the stereotypes and clichés point to and are. This may be part of the reason for the greater political emphasis American self-criticism has acquired in recent years. At least things happen in politics, or seem to do so more definitely. But not only has this renewed emphasis on politics diverted attention from the real sources of our discomfort with ourselves; it has served to create stereotypes that, this time, are false.

The alarmed comments on the McCarthy episode in *Cousins and Strangers* are typical, and they could just as well have been made by most enlightened Americans at that time (before 1953). The latter find it as hard as any foreigner does to understand how the side of light usually manages to win out in an area where the means and the conditions seem so overwhelmingly on the side of darkness. If this is indeed hard to understand, it is because politics is the sphere in which the standardized American personality plays falsest with the reality of Americans themselves, and where what we seem to be doing corresponds least with what we actually do—which is to say that politics is one of the aspects of American life least amenable to accurate stereotyping, and where even what true stereotypes there are are largely misleading or irrelevant. Which is also to say that our politics, with everything that is wrong about it, stands least in need of the attention of our specifically American tradition of self-criticism. It has worked—for whatever extra-political reasons—better than the politics of most other countries, and cannot be complained about in terms like those in which we complain about the American personality or the quality of our life.

Right now, nonetheless, many enlightened Americans continue to insist on doing so. McCarthy and McCarthyism were already on their way out when the anti-shibboleth of "conformism" was raised, meaning that the demand that Bolshevism be universally regarded as a scandal, and not as "another point of view," was acting to stifle independence, individuality, and dissidence in almost every department of American life. Manifestly, politics does not affect that much of it, and anti-Communist "conformism" weighs mostly on people actually drawn to Communist politics. Why then is such an issue made of anti-Communism, one that goes far beyond the necessity of defending civil liberties?

A most important, if unconscious, motive is, I feel, the need to project upon an outer agent the responsibility for an inner, voluntary con-

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formism, from which American liberals suffer in their way as much as Nixon Republicans in theirs. (Illuminating in this context is how much the contributors to Mr. Putt's book tend—albeit inadvertently—to lump intellectual and enlightened Americans together with the rest of the populace, character-wise.) The difference is that liberals are made more uncomfortable by the inner conformism even if they may not be more aware of its real nature. And sensing in politics a freedom from stereotyped actuality as is hardly to be found elsewhere in American life, they think that there they will be able to act most effectively against their discomfort. But this is asking of politics what it cannot give. The conformism we genuinely suffer from is not a matter of politics and cannot be overcome by political means. The perverse result of such a misconception is the attempt, precisely, to subject our politics too to stereotypes.

And since American politics has not generated enough of its own stereotypes (which have nothing to do with campaign oratory), these have to be imported from abroad—from the politics of the Continent, which is truly stereotyped. The Continental left and, even more, the Continental right are imposed upon American politics by mental violence, and politics in general becomes a theater for moral attitudinizing in which "correctness" and righteousness count for more than actual consequences. Fortunately, this system of rhetoric has remained confined to liberal and "neo-conservative" journalism, influencing no one's real political behavior—not even that of the journalists themselves. Unfortunately, foreigners tend to think it (for understandable reasons) representative, and to take it more seriously. To that extent American politics is traduced in the world outside by Americans themselves; and to the extent that Americans cut their attitudes and expressions of feeling to its measure—as so many of the supposedly most enlightened of us are tending to do—to that extent they traduce politics at home. If Graeme C. Moodie—a Fellow in political science, no less, and one of the few contributors to *Cousins and Strangers* who happens to be a professional writer—can write in 1950 that the United States was to "an appreciable degree along the road to a relatively polite and civilized form of totalitarianism," his own weaknesses as a political observer are not entirely to blame; he was, I am sure, told the same thing by many Americans.

Hitler's Economist

CONFESSIONS OF "THE OLD WIZARD." By HJALMAR HORACE GREELEY SCHACHT. Houghton Mifflin. 484 pp. $5.50.

Reviewed by MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM

IN MEDIEVAL demonology, a wizard was the male equivalent of a witch, a man who had sold his soul to the devil. Thus far we need not quarrel with the title of the American edition of Dr. Schacht's autobiography. But "confessions"? Only if acknowledging unfailing rectitude of purpose and infallible judgment in oneself may be called a "confession"; to these Dr. Schacht is ready to confess, even if nobody else accuses him of them.

Yet the *Confessions* can be a useful source of information, if we read them with our eyes open. In some instances Schacht convicts himself out of his own mouth. Thus, in explaining why he signed the Young Plan modifying the terms of Germany's World War I reparations, and then later denounced it, he writes: "The question at issue was whether one was justified in refusing to sign, since to do so would give rise to the danger of serious new political entanglements; or whether, having signed, one should continue steadily to resist reparations in general until the occasion arose which would enable them to be put an end to once and for all. I had decided in favor of the second method." The alternative of making an honest attempt to fulfill an agreement which he had negotiated—and as a part of which, not mentioned by Dr. Schacht, Germany received a large international loan—seems never to have occurred to him.

One need not believe that the reparations system set up by the Treaty of Versailles made political or economic sense, even as modified by the Dawes and Young plans, to condemn the systematic dishonesty of Schacht's treatment of the reparations question. This dishonesty characterized his methods as an official and politician, and it characterizes his discussion today. Thus he makes it seem as if the proceeds of Germany's huge foreign loans in the 20's played no constructive role, but were merely paid back again to the Allies in reparations and debt service. Actually, they served to give Germany a tremendous new industrial machine, more efficient than any other in Europe.

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The economic expansion of Germany under the Weimar Republic, on the basis of foreign loans which were made possible by the Dawes and Young plans, was the indispensable prerequisite of the financial legerdemain by which Schacht and Hitler later financed German rearmament. For it created a productive capacity which could have been used to repay the commercial debts and even pay reparations, but which Schacht diverted, by a policy of debt repudiation (reparations had already been canceled), into arms manufacture and the purchase of foreign raw materials for them.*

Dr. Schacht is again his own accuser in seeking to dissociate himself from Nazi anti-Semitism. He writes: "As I see it there is one single factor which gives rise to the widespread unpopularity of the Jews . . . owing to his ability, and whenever he resides in a non-Jewish community, the Jew endeavors to insinuate himself into the intellectual and cultural leadership of that community. . . . But when the legal and medical professions showed an unusually high percentage of Jews; when most of the theaters, the press, the concerts, were under Jewish management, then this constitutes the incursion of a foreign element into the spirit of the hostess nation. . . . All the above-mentioned professions exercise a civilizing influence. And civilization, in the long run, is rooted in religion. . . . A nation whose civilization is rooted in Christianity will therefore always be at pains to . . . discourage foreign elements in its cultural life." And later he quotes from his Nuremberg testimony the statement: "In regard to the predominating influence of the Jews in government, legal, and cultural matters. . . . I have always declared myself in favor of limiting Jewish activity to a certain extent in all these fields—a numerical limitation, based not absolutely on population figures, but rather on a certain percentage."

It is of course true that there were many differences between the anti-Semitism of the Nazis and that of Schacht. He had no use for the brawling Storm Troopers who destroyed national assets by burning Jewish-owned buildings or smashing the windows of Jewish stores. Nor was he unmindful of the adverse effects of anti-Jewish violence on Germany's international economic relations. On these points he repeatedly made his opinion clear, to the annoyance of various Nazi leaders and eventually of the "Fuehrer" himself. But Schacht is, of course, not to be believed when he writes that from the Nuremberg indictment he "learned for the first time of the monstrous crimes committed against humanity, above all against the Jews, by Hitler himself and by his orders." He was at least nominally a member of Hitler's cabinet until 1943, although he played no active part in the government after 1939, and he had excellent independent sources of information. Indeed, his friend Gisevius, testifying for him at Nuremberg, stated that they "had known about all the horrors." Since Schacht emphasizes and re-emphasizes his claim that he was an active opponent of the Nazis almost from the beginning of Hitler's regime, both within the government and outside it, one wonders what he hopes to gain from this particular little attempt at deception. Nevertheless, he can certainly not have approved of the extermination camps or other mass atrocities; they represented a type of political and economic lunacy altogether alien to his spirit. The considerations of prudence which led him to object to the anti-Jewish boycott and the 1938 pogrom apply all the more forcefully here.

But if Dr. Schacht was not a partner to the worst excesses of the Nazi regime, he cannot escape a good measure of political responsibility for them—though he certainly tries to. No amount of double-talk can conceal or excuse his key role in undermining the Weimar Republic and bringing the Nazis to power, as well as in carrying out their policies in the crucial first years of the Hitler regime. He performed the indispensable task of breaking down big business's distrust of Nazi "radicalism" and winning its support for Hitler. He himself tries to explain the assistance he gave the Nazi seizure of power on the basis of his "democratic outlook." He writes: "In my opinion the will of the people must always remain the supreme law of government. . . . For this reason I regarded it as certain that a government under the chancellorship of Adolf Hitler could no longer be avoided if one did not wish to run the risk of military dictatorship and civil war. . . . After the uncertainty and feebleness of previous governments who had allowed unemployment figures to increase to six

*The best account of Schacht's fiscal methods is Norbert Muhlen's book, *Schacht: Hitler's Magician* (1938).

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million, the election results of July 31, 1932, enabled me to look forward again to the possibility of an uninterrupted steady and energetic government." The pleasure he took in the Nazi gains in that election, and the fact that according to his own testimony he had urged Bruening to include the Nazis in his cabinet immediately after his first meeting with Hitler on January 5, 1931, form an interesting commentary on his statement that, prior to July 31, 1932, "I had never . . . supported Hitler either in writing or by word of mouth."

Other statements of his, however, furnish a somewhat more plausible explanation of the attraction he found in the Nazis. For one thing, he shared their contempt for the German people; at one point he writes: "The people of Germany have never been able to resist a man who forces his way on to the platform." For another, the Nazi attitude toward the truth must have had a strong attraction for the man who testified at Nuremberg: "If you want to lead anyone, I believe you stand a far better chance if you don't tell him your real reasons than if you do."

Schacht's whole prior career may, indeed, be seen as a preparation for the Nazi period. In 1919, according to his own account, he became one of the founders of the Democratic party after consulting with Stresemann, representative of conservative big business, on the need to form a "left" bourgeois party in order to draw strength away from the Social Democrats. It was through this political connection that he became president of the Reichsbank and had the opportunity, by putting into effect the plans already prepared by others, to become the "savior of the mark." But when the Democratic party had served his purpose and was rapidly losing ground, he ostentatiously resigned from it in "protest" at its failure to come out unequivocally against the proposed confiscation of the Hohenzollern properties.

As president of the Reichsbank under the Republic, Schacht increasingly engaged in political propaganda against the government, and used his powers to thwart it so far as possible in both its foreign and domestic policies. It is instructive to compare his attitude on specific issues with that which he later adopted under the Nazis. Where, under the Republic, he haggled bitterly about every small Reichsbank advance to the government and demanded policy concessions in return, he tells us now how he unhesitatingly made twelve billion marks available to the Nazis through a scheme of credit inflation. Under the Republic, he denounced and sought to block public works of every type, and contributed to the growth of that unemployment which he was later to use as an excuse for supporting Hitler; under the Nazis, he was as ardent in defending public works of every description as he had been in condemning them previously. Can one doubt that the difference was due to a desire in the one case to undermine the power of the democratic parties, and in the other to reinforce that of the Nazis? Schacht was an enemy of the Weimar Republic long before he came out into the open at Bad Harzburg.

He had been so anxious to see Hitler come to power—and to use the opportunity to regain the Reichsbank presidency he had been forced out of in 1930—that he opposed any limitation on the "Fuehrer's" power. When he was asked in November 1932 whether Hitler could accept the limitations inherent in taking office under the constitution, Schacht replied: "If a man takes over a great task, and therewith a great responsibility, this task must not be hedged round with restrictions in regard to the new methods to be adopted." Now, however, he writes impudently of the period after Hitler had taken power with his assistance and was filling concentration camps and cemeteries with political opponents: "The non-National-Socialist Right-wingers and the remaining Moderate parties had it in their power to compel obedience to the rules of the constitution. Why, under these circumstances, an Enabling Act was introduced on March 23, 1933, which should give the government authority to make constitutional changes, was and remains a complete mystery. The Reichstag surrendered its powers of control without any need to do so. . . . Democracy had dug its own grave." Meanwhile, Dr. Schacht visited the United States and Britain, seeking to win support for the new regime from Franklin Roosevelt, Stephen Wise, and various likelier prospects.

But, inveterate intriguer and seeker after power that he was, Schacht could no more remain contented under the Nazis than he had been under the Republic. He had thought he was using them; it was an illusion they soon dispelled. At first, he was in his element in the scramble for power *under* Hitler; by securing the support of the "Fuehrer" and Hermann

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Goering, he was able to outmaneuver various less agile or more principled opponents such as Walther Darré, Alfred Hugenberg, and Kurt Schmitt. (In July 1934—immediately after the notorious "blood purge"—he succeeded in displacing the last-named as Minister for Economic Affairs.) But when he tried to use his offices to acquire power *over* Hitler, he soon found out the facts of life. The powers of his ministry were transferred bit by bit to a new organization headed by Hermann Goering; it was already a shell when he left it in November 1937. From this time on, he was engaged in continual intrigues against the government, even though he retained the Reichsbank presidency until January 1939 and remained a nominal cabinet member until 1943.

THESE intrigues are the basis of Schacht's claim to have participated in the German resistance. But it is by no means clear that at this stage—or even much later—he had any desire to secure the overthrow of the Nazi regime. Rather, there is at least strong evidence indicating that his purpose was to win back his former key place in it. (To do this, he was certainly willing to precipitate a crisis if he could, in the hope that the Nazis would then be forced to come to him for help.) This would explain his offer to Hitler, made in January 1940 and repeated in the autumn of 1941, to go to America as a propagandist. It would also fit in with his efforts, as late as 1943, to give the "Fuehrer" advice.

Actually, Schacht appears to have been willing to have Hitler removed, and to have indicated as much to various others, but to have been sufficiently cautious in his initiatives so that there was little possibility of their producing any result. Those who were seriously endeavoring to overthrow the Nazi regime always regarded him with suspicion. In the words of Professor Hans Rothfels of Chicago (*The German Opposition to Hitler*), writing about the July 20 rebellion: "Nor can Schacht be included in the group of the civilian leaders. He was certainly very active in opposition since 1936, increasingly so after his dismissal in January 1939. . . . But a marked record of ambition, vanity, and opportunism prevented his being admitted to full partnership." The SS investigators also concluded that Schacht had no part in the conspiracy.

He was, however, arrested in connection with it, though he was not tortured or executed as were those against whom the Gestapo had any evidence. So, like Hermann Goering, he was the "Fuehrer's" prisoner when the Americans came and, as he thought, rescued him. It was therefore a great shock to him when he was brought before the Nuremberg tribunal. He was sufficiently resourceful to make a good thing even of his imprisonment; he succeeded in setting up a flourishing trade in his autograph, which he gave to his guards and to the representatives of the press in return for cigarettes and chocolate. His acquittal at Nuremberg was probably technically justified: although he certainly had a part in the preparations which enabled Hitler to wage war, the prosecution was unable to prove he was consciously engaged in preparing for aggression.

Schacht was less pleased at his acquittal than resentful at his trial. But his real wrath was reserved for the subsequent efforts of the German authorities to punish him under the de-Nazification procedures. These he compares unfavorably with Nazi justice. Nowhere does one find any indication that he feels the slightest remorse for his role in bringing Hitler to power, or in facilitating Nazi rearmament. Even today, he can speak of "such political catchwords as Democracy, Freedom, Self-government, which, even among the most highly developed and educated nations, have acquired a certain value only when qualified by corresponding limitations, but which can prove positively devastating when voiced by a completely ignorant, illiterate crowd." And when the Indonesian government, misled by his reputation for wizardry, asked his advice, his prescription was—labor legislation modeled on Hitler's!

British and American Jewries

THE JEWISH HERITAGE. Edited by EPHRAIM LEVINE. Vallentine, Mitchell (London). 225 pp. 18 shillings.

MIDCENTURY. Edited by HAROLD U. RIBALOW. Beechhurst. 600 pp. $6.00.

JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA. Edited by THEODORE FRIEDMAN and ROBERT GORDIS. Horizon Press. 352 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by JACOB NEUSNER

THESE three anthologies, two American and one British, contrast strikingly. The British volume, *The Jewish Heritage,* is well organ-

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ized, well mannered, and well tempered by a tone of apology and reasonableness; it is an effort to convince indirectly, in mellow voice and precise diction, that Judaism is a Good Thing. The two American anthologies, though of varying quality—*Midcentury* being formless and pointless, and *Jewish Life in America* serious and thoughtful—are intense books, full of self-criticism and soul-searching. On the whole, they are more deeply concerned with examining the meaning of "Jewishness" than with representing Judaism to the non-Jewish world—which is to say that they tend to be decidedly less apologetic than the British book.

While in America Jewish apologetics tend to be very sharply divorced from Jewish scholarship, in England it is almost impossible to distinguish between the two. Like Aristeas of Alexandria, the "best minds" of British Jewry never tire of demonstrating that the Jews are more Greek than the Greeks. Thus the *Jewish Heritage's* eight essays propose to "show the various forms of the heritage and to prove that their value for our modern civilization has enhanced our responsibility to cherish them and in turn to imbue posterity with appreciation of a similar sense of duty."

The writers in *Heritage* employ English attitudes to justify Jewish practices. In the English mind, for example, submitting to a discipline is a fine and sporting gesture which excuses all manner of absurd behavior; hence dietary laws are "a form of discipline . . . invaluable in the training of a holy people." Nothing much is said about commandments or the Biblical claim of divine authority. Indeed, the commandments are regarded here as "a ceremonial code . . . the casket designed to enclose and protect a jewel." *Kashrut,* in this view of things, becomes a kind of ground rule.

The pitfall of apology is contrivedness, and the Judaism of *Jewish Heritage* is jerry-built. Revelation is explained away: "If universalism be the matter of any faith worth having, it cannot find expression in religious form without some positive doctrine of revelation." The treatment of prayer leaves the impression that the "ceremonial and liturgy" of the Jews is to be debated in the context of High or Low Church ritual; there is no notion that such ceremonial derives from obedience to the Divine Will. Like all other commitments, the commitment to apologize has its cost, and the

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price of the *Heritage* is the sacrifice of a sense of the objective truth of Judaism.

And finally, there is the ultimate absurdity of apologia, the effort to prove that the soundest institutions of the host civilization have direct antecedents in Judaism; a parade of the Jewish influences on English common law is one example. True or not, such triviality costs Judaism too high a price, in England or elsewhere.

As AGAINST the *Jewish Heritage's* sober gentility, *Midcentury* and *Jewish Life in America* (though very different books) have in common an uninhibited vitality that seems to say: Never mind what the world will think!

The work of a journeyman anthologist, *Midcentury* portrays American Jewry vividly and with more than a touch of vulgarity, through every conceivable shade of disagreement. There are essays on "I Changed My Name" and "I've Kept My Name" (two pieces which have been quite over-anthologized). Four essays in the vein of a rather out-dated intellectual melancholia are included ("The Lost Young Intellectual," "The Plight of the Jewish Intellectual," "To the Young Jewish Intellectual," and "Troubled Intellectuals"), and these are followed by nine short essays on "Why I Wrote a Jewish Novel," and then "The Dilemma of the Jewish Writer." By this time, Irving Kristol's charming piece, "Is Jewish Humor Dead?" leads to certain obvious conclusions, if a sense for the ridiculous is an element of Jewish humor.

What sort of book emerges? Surely not an "anthology of Jewish life and culture in our times." An anthology is properly the work of a thoughtful artist who seeks through the sensitive selection, arrangement, and introduction of individual pieces to portray a given situation or set of ideas. No less than an essay, an anthology ought to be an expression of taste and opinion. What kind of taste is revealed in an anthology on "Culture" which juxtaposes "The Problem of Ernest Bloch" with "Why Jews Stay Sober"?

The almost total absence of critical standards in *Midcentury* recalls the words of Milton Himmelfarb ("Jews and Philistines," the *Jewish Frontier,* September 1954): "If we are to believe what we read in the critical works of the experts, supreme excellence is as widely distributed among our contemporaries as long life was among Noah's predecessors." Yet the irony of *Midcentury* is that, unwittingly, it does provide a very true picture of "Jewish life and culture in our time"—in its very lack of discrimination, in its undefined commitment to an unknown something which is called Jewishness. Jews somehow remain Jews and are concerned with Jewishness. This tautology is what *Midcentury* has to tell us about mid-century American Jewry; all the rest is commentary.

In contrast to the hodge-podge character of *Midcentury, Jewish Life in America* (an expanded edition of the Tercentenary issue of the quarterly journal *Judaism,* containing thorough and careful studies of everything from Orthodoxy to secularism, from visual arts to interfaith relations) is unified by a pervasive sense of self-criticism, a feeling that Judaism is a cause to be saved or lost in a single generation. For the contributors to this volume, the American Jewish community stands in judgment to the future and the past. The indictment is specified ("American Jewry is commonly charged with materialism"; "Jewish music in America before the First World War has little to recommend it"); the excuses are listed ("There are only a handful of rabbis who manage to fight off the demands of daily duties to devote some hours to study and perhaps even to creative scholarship"); the accomplishments are urged ("Jewish education in recent years has been meeting its challenges with newer responses"); and in the end, when a plea is entered ("They are all begging to be portrayed in short and long fiction—and also in poetry and drama, two departments wherein American Jewry has not yet produced anything truly noteworthy"), it is "Guilty," not "*Nolo contendere.*" And always the promise, which recurs in every essay: it may well be that the next hundred years will indeed see the flowering. . . .

The case for American Jewry closes with the thought expressed in Dr. Gordis's introduction: "The instruments for a renaissance of Judaism in the days to come are at hand." Whatever the subject—the rabbinate, litterateurs, musicians, the synagogues—the conclusion is always the same: we have failed, but we can succeed.

Nothing could be further from the unobtrusive Judaism and the ultimate timidity of the British anthology than the vigorous assertion made in different ways by *Midcentury* and *Jewish Life in America* that we belong

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here and that we shall count in the sum of all Israel; that what Jews in America create, or destroy, is of consequence to the ages. The two great English-speaking Jewries are mirrored in these anthologies, and perhaps, by indirection, also the nations of which they are respectively part.

Talmudic Portraiture

THE FATHERS ACCORDING TO RABBI NATHAN (ABOT DE-RABBI NATAN). Translated from the Hebrew by JUDAH GOLDIN. Yale University Press. Volume X, Yale Judaica Series, editor, Julian Obermann, published for Judaica Research at Yale University on the Louis M. Rabinowitz Foundation. 277 pp. $4.75.

Reviewed by LOUIS FINKELSTEIN

THE Talmud is generally considered a record of ideas, but few realize that it is also a great treasure house of portraiture. Without ever attempting full-length biography, the Talmud intimately describes the great men who flit across its pages. And of all the Talmudic works admitting us into the very workshop of its authors, none is more skillful in its characterizations than the *Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan,* a remarkable record of the ancient discussions which led to the formulation of the ethical norms contained in the *Chapters of the Fathers* (Pirke Abot) and to the commentaries on them. In this storehouse of history and wisdom, we hear of the early life of Rabbi Akiba and his teacher, Rabbi Eliezer; we see Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai in the camp of the Romans, face to face with Vespasian; we find Rabbi Eleazar ben Arak, the foremost scholar of his day, who abandoned the Academy and forgot his learning because his wife preferred a town with good water supply to Yabneh, which had only scholarship to recommend it; we come across a whole chapter (unique in Rabbinic literature) of maxims uttered by Elisha ben Abuyah, in his early years a colleague of Rabbi Akiba but later an apostate and informer for the Romans; we hear Judah ben Tabbai, threatened with removal from the presidency of the Pharisaic council, bluntly confessing: "When someone said to me before I entered high office, 'Enter it,' I had one wish; to hound

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him to death! Now that I have come into it, whenever someone tells me to quit it, I have one wish: to upset a kettle of boiling water on him!"

Until 1955, this work was not available to English readers. Now through the vision of Louis M. Rabinowitz, the skill of Judah Goldin, and the wisdom of Yale University, there is an English translation not only authoritative in scholarship and faithful in rendition, but a delight to read. Professor Goldin, who has caught the spirit of the ancient authors, even manages to reproduce the cadence of their words.

THE authors of *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan*—some probably pre-Maccabean (before 165 B.C.E.) and the latest dating four centuries later—displayed versatility and brilliance in carrying out their task.

In the *Chapters of the Fathers,* we are told that a man who called himself Ben He-He (probably to achieve anonymity) said: "According to the painstaking, the reward." In *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan* we are told, "Once Hillel the Elder was walking along the road and met men carrying wheat. 'At how much a *seah?*' he asked them. 'Two denars,' they replied. Then he met others, he asked them, 'At how much a *seah?*' 'Three denars,' they said. 'But the former said two!' he protested. 'Stupid Babylonian,' they retorted, 'knowest thou not that according to the painstaking is the reward.' "

Here we discover that this famous Talmudic saying originated in an ass driver's casual remark to Hillel, was taught by Hillel in the Academy, and then transmitted in the *Chapters of the Fathers* by a saintly disciple who preferred to remain anonymous. Hillel used the incident to show his disciples the indispensability of taking pains to achieve a good life. A carrier who brings wheat a short distance earns two denars; he who carries the same wheat a longer distance earns three. Like the wheat, so the words of the Torah do not change, but re-study provides insights not available at first glance. This observation led Hillel to formulate the apothegm: "Search it, search it again, for everything's in it. And in whatever there is, according to the painstaking, the reward."

In the *Chapters of the Fathers* (Abot 1.5) Joseph ben Johanan says: "Let thy house be opened wide, and let the poor be members of thy household." In *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan,* the implications of this apothegm are developed:

"Let thy house be opened wide: how so? This teaches that a man's house should have a spacious entrance on the north, south, east, and west, like Job's, who made four doors to his house. Why did Job make four doors to his house? So that the poor would not be troubled to go all around the house: one coming from the north could enter in his stride; one coming from the south could enter in his stride; and so in all directions.

"And let the poor be members of thy household. Not actually members of thy household. But let the poor talk about what they had to eat and drink in thy house the way the poor used to talk about what they had to eat and drink in Job's house. When they met one would say to the other:

" 'Where art thou coming from?' 'From Job's house.' 'And where art thou going?' 'To Job's house.' "

But another interpretation is also offered. The apothegm does not mean "Let the poor be members of thy household," but "Let the members of thy household be humble." Says the commentator in *The Fathers According to Rabbi Nathan:*

"Teach the members of thy household humility. For when one is humble and the members of his household are humble, if a poor man comes and stands in the doorway of the master of the house, and inquires of them, 'Is your father within?' they answer, 'Aye, come in, enter.' Even before he has entered a table is set for him. When he enters and eats and drinks, and offers a blessing up to Heaven, great delight of spirit is vouchsafed to the master of the house.

"But when one is not humble, and the members of his household are short tempered, if a poor man comes and stands in the doorway and inquires of them, 'Is your father within?' they answer, 'No!' and rebuke him and drive him off in anger."

THIS wealth of learning is presented in attractive, lucid prose whose easy flow conceals Professor Goldin's labor to combine clarity for the modern reader with faithfulness to the ancient text. (The quotations above are from his translation.) Learned notes are supplied, with cross references to parallel passages in other Talmudic works, and with reminders of discussions and commentaries in modern

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scholarly works. Professor Goldin also presents variant readings, and possible alternative renderings. And he even admits that some passages have thus far eluded clear interpretation, and can be translated only by guess-work. All of which helps make his translation a valuable contribution to scholarship and letters.

Short Stories from Europe

BEASTS AND MEN. By PIERRE GASCAR. Atlantic-Little, Brown. 249 pp. $3.50.
THE MARKED ONE. By JACOB PICARD. The Jewish Publication Society of America. 267 pp. $3.00.
THE BOUND MAN. By ILSE AICHINGER. Noonday Press. 100 pp. $2.75.

Reviewed by IRVING FELDMAN

THESE three collections of European short stories are concerned in differing ways with one of the key problems of our time: the need for, and the absence of, genuine community. This is a new theme for fiction. Typically, novels and stories have always dealt with the vicissitudes or development of a hero, the interplay of interest, the relations between men as they take form in love and friendship or their opposites. Yet none of these, not even friendship, is the peculiar thing that community is: for community is friendship with a public content, the sense of a vital and necessary relation to others, the sense that one's happiness and existence depend on others just as theirs depend on oneself. It is precisely this kind of community that totalitarianism destroyed in Europe. The experience of the concentration camps has shown that there is no relation between people so vital and necessary that terror will not break it down, and that it is possible to reduce a man to the point where no one can help him and he can help no one.

In *Beasts and Men* Pierre Gascar, a French journalist who served in the French army during the last war and was captured by the Germans, attempts to find a new basis for community in the terrors of the war itself. He is not completely successful, but to my knowledge, only Camus among contemporary European writers has tried to do the same. Jacob Picard, a noted German Jewish writer, tries in *The Marked One* to establish a communion with the Jewish past; if this seems narrower than Gascar's effort, it is probably because all the stories in the volume were finished by 1938, when Jewish suffering was still singular, and the full scope of man's bestialization in Central (and Eastern) Europe still unknown. The stories by the young Austrian Ilse Aichinger collected in *The Bound Man,* on the other hand, seem inspired by a facile existentialism that takes an oddly comfortable and self-righteous delight in affirming what is called "the tragic vision of life," the essential aloneness and limitation of man. There seems to exist for Miss Aichinger only the possibility of the most tenuous of communities: men bound together by the affirmation of their common aloneness. Unable to reach one another, they yet may reach the same philosophy.

THE material in Gascar's *Beasts and Men* was originally published in two separate volumes in France, both of which received the Prix Concourt. One of the two, "The Season of the Dead," is a short novel about a French prisoner of war who witnesses the execution of Jews by the Nazis; it is a really remarkable work hardly equaled in the fiction of the last decade. The other section also deals with the themes of de-

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humanization and community in a series of symbolic stories about animals and their human masters. The animal stories are done with power and conviction, though they are perhaps less impressive in their grasp of the subject than "The Season of the Dead."

Gascar's art lies in conception and form; when he attempts fine turns of language, he often becomes clumsy and obvious. Moreover, he tends to lean too much on pseudo-philosophical staffs like Fate, Life, Death; yet it is a rare author who handles such ponderous abstractions and does not collapse under them: Gascar doesn't, mainly because they are never merely abstract to him. His Fate is really the prisoner's helpless waiting to be murdered by his guards; his Death is not anything so amiably fulfilling as what Miss Aichinger calls "the end," it is the stench and decay of the corpses of what had once been human beings; his Life is the thrust and awkwardness of animals and, above all, the rage of hunger and the flowing of blood.

Gascar's world is haunted by the twin specters of hunger and guilt, a world where all are either guards or prisoners bound to each other by a secret complicity. It is the world of the concentration camp. In one sense, the beasts in the animal stories reflect the dehumanization of their masters, who do indeed exist at a level where notions like Fate and Death have a concrete reality. But from another point of view, they are totemic, flourishing with the decline of their guards, declining with their ascendancy. They are not mere enemies, for the humans are bound to them by a community of hunger and savagery. Of love, too, at times. But this latter, Gascar seems to say, depends upon breaking down the barriers of impersonality and anonymity—the victim must be named; only then can the murderer fully assume guilt, and the murder itself become sacrificial. The crucial act in "The House of Blood," for example, is the half-mad butcher's naming of the animals he is about to slaughter.

The main deficiency of the beast stories is Gascar's attribution of a feeling of guilt to the masters. However, in the concentration camps, according to former inmates, it was the prisoners and not their guards who were overwhelmed by guilt—for only the prisoners had a sense of community and yet were unable to save one another. (The least uncomfortable participants in the Nuremberg war crimes trials were the accused.) This belief that the tormentor has the same moral reaction as the tormented is what accounts for the obsessive quality of the beast stories, for their failure to envision an end to hunger and guilt. The victim who becomes the conscience of his tormentor will only be victimized again, even if only by himself.

In "The Season of the Dead," this deficiency is repaired. The narrator is a French prisoner of war in the Ukraine. The French suffer hunger and deprivation but, crucially, there is no terror in their relations with the Germans; even a kind of mutual military respect is observed. The narrator is caretaker of the graveyard for the French prisoners. Behind this strangely pastoral foreground is developed the story of the Jews of Brodno who, paralyzed with fear and guilt, hopelessly await their end at the hands of the Nazis. It is a terrible story, yet Gascar's insight and compassion make it art.

THERE is a certain pathos about the pious and modest tales of Jewish village life during the 19th and early 20th centuries that make up *The Marked Ones*. Written for the most part after the advent of Hitler but before the outbreak of the war, their purpose—sometimes explicitly stated within the stories themselves—is to inspire the courage to endure persecution. Picard recalls the Jewish survival of past oppression, the values of Jewish life and religion, and the roots of the Jewish community in German soil. But this very looking backward keeps the stories from being anything more than pathetic. Indeed, the apparent failure of the author to understand the Nazi persecution as more than just another pogrom lends a kind of grotesque quaintness to these tales.

Picard does succeed, however, in capturing the narrow, suffocating life of the village; the extraordinary religious saturation of daily routine; the sense of the Messianic singularity of the Jewish nation, and with this a righteousness not unmixed with vanity. There is the morbid hypersensitivity of Jews to the intentions of their Gentile neighbors toward them; there is the community sustained in the Law, and the passivity of those denied civil rights, and there is the will to endure against "the great distrust of the world, which grew out of ignorance of our fathers and of their true character." So these figures appear: trained in perseverance but not in resistance, stigmatized if not maimed by old tyrannies. This world is not entirely attractive to me, but Jacob Picard

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writes of it with great understanding, devotion, and sensitivity.

ILSE AICHINGER'S collection *The Bound Man* seems largely a tedious affair, yet the tedium itself is interesting. Her message, written large and obviously throughout, is an existentialist one: that human life is possible only within its limitations, that awareness of this permits one to realize oneself as a human being, while ignorance of it compels murder, or repetition, or aimlessness, or pose—what may, in short, be called states of non-existence. Thus "The Advertisement" tells of figures on a billboard poster who wish to escape from their "absoluteness" and "purity," much as if the figures in Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" desired suddenly to leap back into this world of dying. All this is treated with a rather labored lyricism which portentously and for no good reason animizes everything it touches—whether Nature itself or things in a poster.

Existentialism, especially in its literary form, yearns toward the dramatic. Yet there is no action and no drama in Miss Aichinger's stories; she is all *mise-en-scène*, and must resort to expository discourse, as in "Speech Under the Gallows," or arid allegory, as in the title story, in order to present the dramatic issue of limitation in a world of absolutes. In short, Miss Aichinger appears not to see the human for gazing so long upon what the dust jacket solemnly calls "the human situation."

Because it attempts to juxtapose the human and the absolute, Miss Aichinger's fiction demands comparison with that of a great writer by whom she is much influenced, Franz Kafka. We are told that Kafka laughed as he read his stories aloud to his friends. The dogged humanness of his characters, the passionate way they go on with limited means in an absolute situation—this is the source of Kafka's comedy. And comedy, it seems to me, is the appropriate response to the existentialist vision. Only for the tragic hero, like Othello, does Desdemona become the whole world; but the existentialist "choice" (the recognition and acceptance of human limitation) never means a turning away from the absolute—on the contrary, one continues to recognize the absolute all around. Miss Aichinger, however, tries to force a tragic dignity on the essentially comic existentialist situation, she tries to show that, if we recognize it for what it is, the human situation is good. It seems more vital to show that somehow it is laughable.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

CLEMENT GREENBERG is associate editor of COMMENTARY.

MAURICE J. GOLDBLOOM, a regular contributor, is author of *American Security and Freedom.*

LOUIS FINKELSTEIN is chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary and author of *The Pharisees,* among other works of Jewish scholarship.

JACOB NEUSNER, a young writer, is preparing for the rabbinate at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

IRVING FELDMAN is a young poet, now in Paris working on a translation of Laforgue.

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***From the TALMUD, Berachot 17A**

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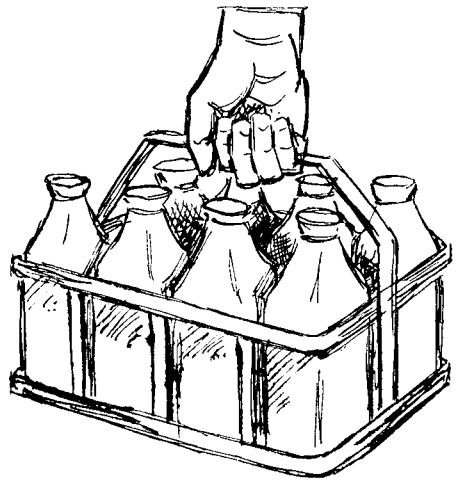

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